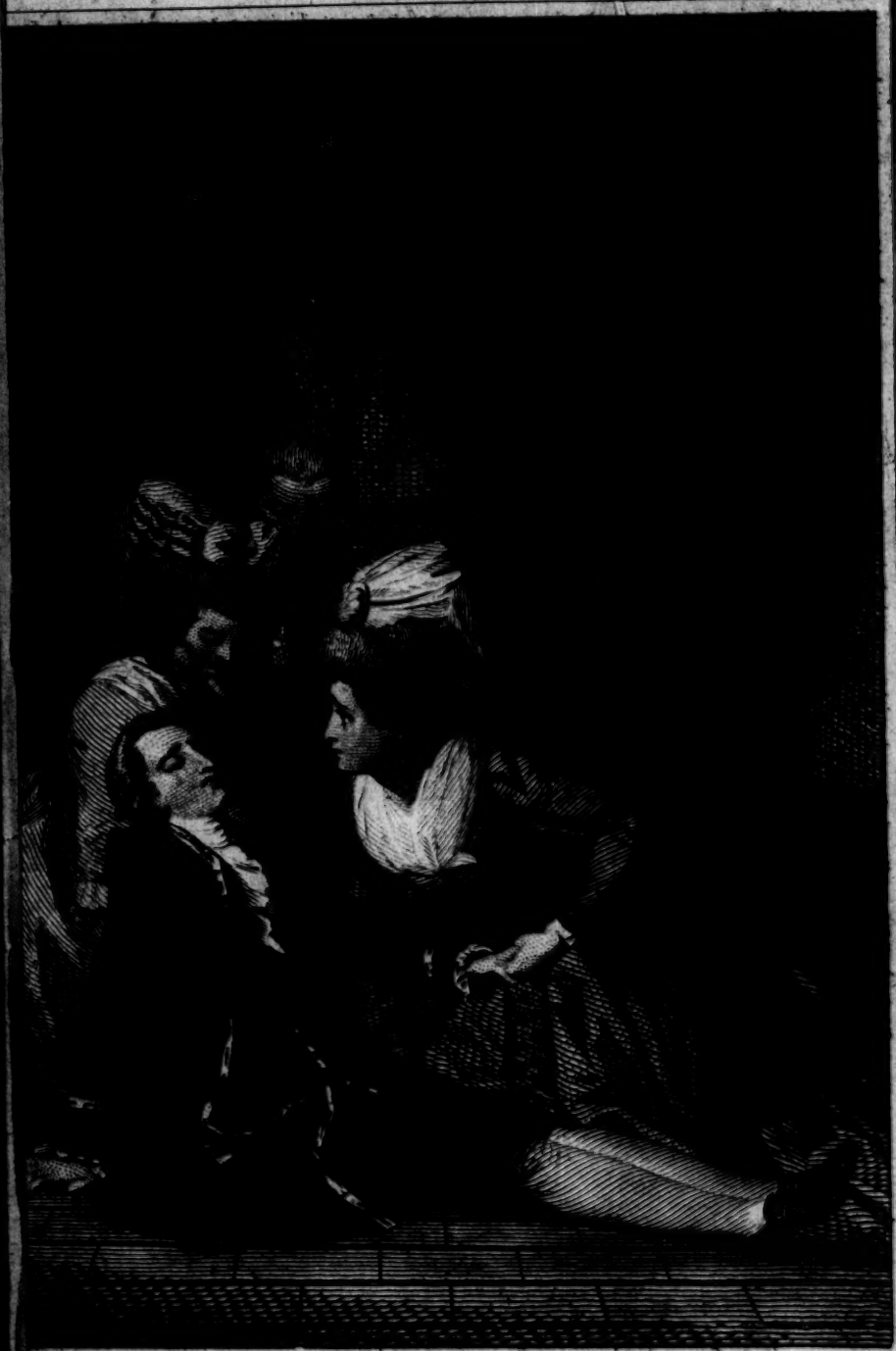


GAMESTER.



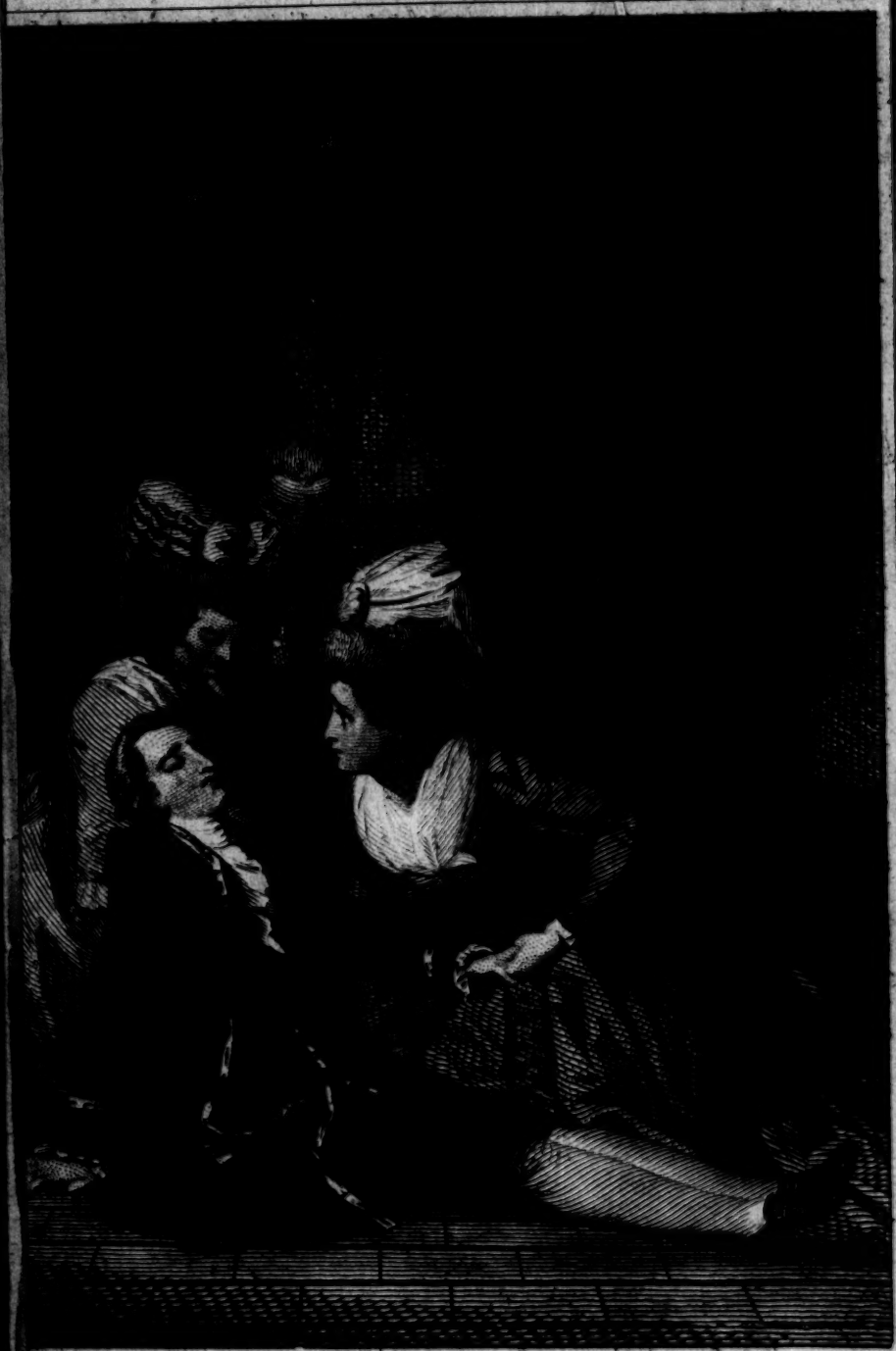
Published Dec: 24th 1788.

Black, & Co.

M^{rs} SIDDONS as M^{rs} BEVERLEY.

*V. Scene 4. Bev. O! for a few short Moments! to tell you
how my Heart bleeds for you.—*

GAMESTER.



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THE
G A M E S T E R.
A
T R A G E D Y.

WRITTEN BY

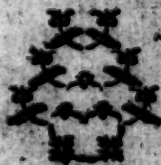
MR. M O O R E.

(Edward) Applegate
Marked with the Variations in the

MANAGER'S BOOK

AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.



L O N D O N:

Printed for T. and W. LOWNDEN, T. DAVIES,
and J. BAW.

M.DCC.LXXXIV.

The Reader is desired to observe, that the passages omitted in the Representation at the Theatres are here preserved, and marked with inverted Commas; as in Line 27, Page 2.



P R O L O G U E.

LIKE *fam'd-La Mancha's Knight, who lance in hand*
Mounted his steed to free th' enchanted land,
Our Quixote bard sets out a monster-taming,
Arm'd at all points, to fight that hydra——Gaming.
Aloft on Pegasus he waves his pen,
And hurls defiance at the caitiff's den:
The first on fancy'd giants spent his rage,
But this has more than windmills to engage.
He combats passion, rooted in the soul,
Whose powers at once delight ye and controul;
Whose magic bondage each lost slave enjoys,
Nor wishes freedom, tho' the spell destroys.
To save our land from this magician's charms,
And rescue maids and matrons from his arms,
Our knight poetic comes—And, oh! ye fair!
This black enchanter's wicked arts beware!
His subtle poison dims the brightest eyes,
And at his touch each grace and beauty dies.
Lowe, gentleness, and joy, to rage give way,
And the soft dove becomes a bird of prey.
May this our bold advent'rer break the spell,
And drive the dæmon to his native hell!

Ye slaves of passion, and ye dupes of chance,
Wake all your pow'rs from this destructive trance!
Shake off the shackles of this tyrant vice:
Hear other calls than those of cards and dice:
Be learn'd in nobler arts than arts of play,
And other debts than those of honour pay.
No longer live insensible to shame,
Lost to our country, families and fame.

Could our romantic muse this work achieve,
Wou'd there one honest heart in Britain grieve?
Th' attempt, tho' wild, would not in vain be made,
If ev'ry honest hand wou'd lend his aid.

Dramatis Personæ, 1784.

M E N.

At DRURY-LANE.
Mr. KEMBLE.
Mr. BRERETON.
Mr. PALMER.
Mr. AICKIN.
Mr. PACKER.
Mr. PHILIMORE.
Mr. KENNY.

W O M E N.

Mrs. SIDDONS.
Mrs. BRERETON.
Mrs. HEARD.

Beverley,
Lewson,
Stukely,
Jarvis,
Bates,
Dawson,
Waller,

Mrs. Beverley,
Charlotte,
Lucy.



THE GAMSTER.

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Mrs. Beverley and Charlotte.

Mrs. Bev. **B**E comforted, my dear, all may be well yet. And now, methinks, the lodgings begin to look with another face. O, sister! sister! if these were all my hardships; if all I had to complain of were no more than quitting my house, servants, equipage and them, your pity would be weakness.

Char. Is poverty nothing, then?

Mrs. Bev. Nothing in the world, if it affected only me. While we had a fortune, I was the happiest of the rich; and now 'tis gone, give me but a bare subsistence and my husband's smiles, and I'll be the happiest of the poor. To me now these lodgings want nothing but their master. Why do you look at me?

Char. That I may hate my brother.

Mrs. Bev. Don't talk so, Charlotte.

Char. Has he not undone you?—O! This pernicious vice of gaming! but methinks his usual hours of four or five in the morning might have contented him; 'twas misery enough to wake for him till then. Need he have staid out all night? I shall learn to detest him!

Mrs. Bev. Not for the first fault. He never slept from me before.

Char. Slept from you! no, no, his nights have nothing

thing to do with sleep. How has this one vice driven him from every virtue! nay, from his affections too!

—The time was, sister—

Mrs. Bev. And is. I have no fear of his affections. Wou'd I knew that he were safe!

Char. From ruin and his companions——But that's impossible. His poor little boy, too; what must become of him?

Mrs. Bev. Why want I shall teach him industry. From his father's mistakes he shall learn prudence, and from his mother's resignation, patience. Poverty has no such terrors in it as you imagine. There's no condition of life, sickness and pain excepted, where happiness is excluded. The husbandman, who rises early to his labour, enjoys more welcome rest at night for't. His bread is sweeter to him; his home happier; his family dearer; his enjoyments surer. The sun that rouses him in the morning, sets in the evening to release him. All situations have their comforts, if sweet contentment dwell in the heart. But my poor *Beverly* has none. The thought of having ruin'd those he loves, is misery for ever to him. Wou'd I could ease his mind of that!

Char. If he alone were ruin'd, 'twere just he shou'd be punish'd. He is my brother, 'tis true; but when I think of what he has done; of the fortune you brought him; of his own large estate too, squander'd away upon this vilest of passions, and among the vilest of wretches! O! I have no patience! My own little fortune is untouch'd, he says: wou'd I were sure on't.

Mrs. Bev. And so you may——'twou'd be a sin to doubt it.

Char. I will be sure on't——'twas madness in me to give it to his management. But I'll demand it from him this morning. I have a melancholy occasion for't.

Mrs. Bev. What occasion?

Char. To support a sister.

Mrs. Bev. No; I have no need on't. Take it, and
reward

reward a lover with it. The generous *Lewson* deserves much more. . . Why won't you make him happy?

Char. Because my sister's miserable.

Mrs. Bev. You must not think so. I have my jewels left yet. I'll sell 'em to supply our wants; and when all's gone, these hands shall toil for our support. The poor should be industrious—Why those tears, *Charlotte*?

Char. They flow in pity for you.

Mrs. Bev. All may be well yet. When he has nothing to lose, I shall fetter him in these arms again; and then what is it to be poor?

Char. Cure him of but this destructive passion, and my uncle's death may retrieve all yet.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, *Charlotte*, cou'd we cure him! But the disease of play admits no cure but poverty; and the loss of another fortune would but encrease his shame and his affliction. Will Mr. *Lewson* call this morning?

Char. He said so last night. He gave me hints, too, that he had suspicions of our friend *Stukely*.

Mrs. Bev. Not of treachery to my husband: that he loves play, I know; but surely he's honest.

Char. He would fain be thought so; therefore I doubt him. Honesty needs no pains to set itself off.

Enter Lucy.

Mrs. Bev. What now, *Lucy*?

Lucy. Your old steward, madam. I had not the heart to deny him admittance, the good old man begg'd so hard for't.

[*Exit Lucy.*

Enter Jarvis.

Mrs. Bev. Is this well, *Jarvis*? I desired you to avoid me.

Jar. Did you, madam? I am an old man, and had forgot. Perhaps, too, you forbid my tears; but I am old, madam, and age will be forgetful.

Mrs. Bev. The faithful creature! how he moves me:

[*To Char.*

Char. Not to have seen him had been cruelty.

Jar. I have forgot these apartments, too. I remem-

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her none such in my young master's house; and yet I have liv'd in't these five-and-twenty years. His good father would not have dismiss'd me.

Mrs. Bev. He had no reason, *Jarvis*.

Jar. I was faithful to him while he liv'd, and when he died, he bequeath'd me to his son. I have been faithful to him, too.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, I know it, *Jarvis*.

Char. We both know it.

Jar. I am an old man, madam, and have not a long time to live. I ask'd but to have dy'd with him; and he dismiss'd me.

Mrs. Bev. Pr'ythee no more of this! 'twas his poverty that dismiss'd you.

Jar. Is he indeed so poor, then?—Oh! he was the joy of my old heart——But must his creditors have all?—And have they sold his house, too? his father built it when he was but a prating boy. The times that I have carry'd him in these arms! And, *Jarvis*, says he, when a beggar has ask'd charity of me, why should people be poor? You shā'n't be poor, *Jarvis*; if I was a king, no-body should be poor. Yet he is poor. And then he was so brave!—O he was a brave little boy! and yet so merciful, he'd not have kill'd the gnat that stung him.

Mrs. Bev. Speak to him, *Charlotte*, for I cannot.

Char. When I have wip'd my eyes.

Jar. I have a little money, madam; it might have been more, but I have lov'd the poor. All that I have is yours.

Mrs. Bev. No, *Jarvis*, we have enough yet. I thank you, though, and will deserve your goodness.

Jar. But shall I see my master? and will he let me attend him in his distresses? I'll be no expence to him; and 'twill kill me to be refused. Where is he, madam?

Mrs. Bev. Not at home, *Jarvis*. You shall see him another time.

Char. To-morrow, or the next day—O, *Jarvis*! What a change is here!

Jar.

Jar. A change, indeed, madam! my old heart akes at it. And yet, methinks——But here's somebody coming.

Enter Lucy with Stukely.

Lucy. Mr. *Stukely*, madam.

[*Exit.*

Stu. Good morning to you, ladies. Mr. *Jarvis*, your servant. Where's my friend, madam?

[*To Mrs. Bev.*

Mrs. Bev. I should have ask'd that question of you. Have you seen him to-day?

Stu. No, madam.

Char. Nor last night?

Stu. Last night! did he not come home then?

Mrs. Bev. No. Were you not together?

Stu. At the beginning of the evening; but not since. Where can he have staid?

Char. You call yourself his friend, sir; why do you encourage him in this madness of gaming?

Stu. You have ask'd me that question before, madam; and I told you my concern was that I could not save him. Mr. *Beverley* is a man, madam; and if the most friendly entreaties have no effect upon him, I have no other means. My purse has been his, even to the injury of my fortune. If that has been encouragement, I deserve censure; but I meant it to retrieve him.

Mrs. Bev. I don't doubt it, sir; and I thank you. But where did you leave him last night?

Stu. At *Wilson's*, madam, if I ought to tell; in company I did not like. Possibly he may be there still. Mr. *Jarvis* knows the house, I believe.

Jar. Shall I go, madam?

Mrs. Bev. No, he may take it ill.

Char. He may go as from himself.

Stu. And, if he pleases, madam, without naming me. I am faulty myself, and should conceal the errors of a friend. But I can refuse nothing here.

[*Bowing to the Ladies.*

Jar. I wou'd fain see him, methinks.

Mrs. Bev. Do so, then. But take care how you upbraid him. I have never upbraided him.

Jar. Wou'd I cou'd bring him comfort!

[Exit Jarvis.]

Stu. Don't be too much alarm'd, madam. All men have their errors, and their times of seeing 'em. Perhaps my friend's time is not come yet. But he has an uncle; and old men don't live for ever. You shou'd look forward, madam; we are taught how to value a second fortune by the loss of a first.

[Knocking at the door.]

Mrs. Bew. Hark!—No—that knocking was too rude for Mr. Beverley. Pray Heaven he be well!

Stu. Never doubt it, madam. You shall be well too—Every thing shall be well.

[Knocking again.]

Mrs. Bew. The knocking is a little loud tho'—Who waits there? Will none of you answer?—None of you, did I say?—Alas! what was I thinking of?—I had forgot myself.

Char. I'll go, sister——But don't be alarm'd so.

[Exit.]

Stu. What extraordinary accident have you to fear, madam?

Mrs. Bew. I beg your pardon; but 'tis ever thus with me in Mr. Beverley's absence. No one knocks at the door, but I fancy it is a messenger of ill news.

Stu. You are too fearful, madam; 'twas but one night of absence; and if ill thoughts intrude (as love is always doubtful) think of your worth and beauty, and drive 'em from your breast.

Mrs. Bew. What thoughts? I have no thoughts that wrong my husband.

Stu. Such thoughts indeed would wrong him. The world is full of slander; and every wretch that knows himself unjust, charges his neighbour with like passions, and by the general frailty hides his own——If you are wise, and wou'd be happy, turn a deaf ear to such reports. 'Tis ruin to believe 'em.

Mrs. Bew. Ay, worse than ruin. 'Twould be to sin against conviction. Why was it mention'd?

Stu. To guard you against rumour. The sport of half mankind is mischief; and for a single error they

they make men devils. If their tales reach you, disbelieve 'em.

Mrs. *Bew.* What tales? by whom? why told? I have heard nothing—or if I had, with all his errors, my *Beverley's* firm faith admits no doubt—It is my safety, my seat of rest and joy, while the storm threatens round me. I'll not forsake it. [*Stukely sighs and looks down*] Why turn you, sir, away? and why that sigh?

Stu. I was attentive, madam; and sighs will come we know not why. Perhaps I have been too busy—If it should seem so, impute my zeal to friendship, that meant to guard you against evil tongues. Your *Beverley* is wrong'd, slander'd most vilely—My life upon his truth.

Mrs. *Bew.* And mine too. Who is't that doubts it? But no matter—I am prepar'd, sir—Yet why this caution?—You are my husband's friend; I think you mine too; the common friend of both. [*Pauses*] I had been unconcern'd else.

Stu. For Heaven's sake, madam, be so still! I meant to guard you against suspicion, not to alarm it.

Mrs. *Bew.* Nor have you, sir. Who told you of suspicion? I have a heart it cannot reach.

Stu. Then I am happy—I would say more—but am prevented.

Enter Charlotte.

Mrs. *Bew.* Who was it, *Charlotte*?

Char. What a heart has that *Jarvis*!—A creditor, sister. But the good old man has taken him away—Don't distress his wife! don't distress his sister! I could hear him say. 'Tis cruel to distress the afflicted—And when he saw me at the door, he begg'd pardon that his friend had knock'd so loud.

Stu. I wish I had known of this. Was it a large demand, madam?

Char. I heard not that; but visits such as these we must expect often.—Why so distress'd, sister? this is no new affliction.

Mrs. *Bew.* No, *Charlotte*; but I am faint with watching—

ing—quite funk and spiritless—Will you excuse me, sir? I'll to my chamber, and try to rest a little.

Stu. Good thoughts go with you, madam.

[*Ex. Mrs. Bev.*]

My bait is taken then. [*Aside.*] Poor *Mrs. Beverley*! how my heart grieves to see her thus!

Char. Cure her, and be a friend then.

Stu. How cure her, madam?

Char. Reclaim my brother.

Stu. Ay; give him a new creation; or breathe another soul into him. I'll think on't, madam. Advice I see is thankless.

Char. Useless I am sure it is, if thro' mistaken friendship, or other motives, you feed his passion with your purse, and sooth it by example. Physicians to cure fevers keep from the patient's thirsty lip the cup that wou'd enflame him; you give it to his hands—*(a Knocking.)* Hark Sir—these are my brother's desperate symptoms—Another creditor.

Stu. One not so easily got rid of—What, *Lewson*?

Enter Lewson.

Lew. Madam, your servant—Your's, sir. I was enquiring for you at your lodgings.

Stu. This morning? you had business then?

Lew. You'll call it by another name, perhaps. Where's Mr. *Beverley*, madam?

Char. We have sent to enquire for him.

Lew. Is he abroad then? he did not use to go out so early.

Char. No; nor to stay out so late.

Lew. Is that the case? I am sorry for it. But Mr. *Sukely*, perhaps, may direct you to him.

Stu. I have already, sir:—But what was your business with me?

Lew. To congratulate you upon your late successes at play. Poor *Beverley*! but you ate his friend; and there's a comfort in having successful friends.

Stu. And what am I to understand by this?

Lew. That *Beverley*'s a poor man, with a rich friend—that's all.

Stu.

Stu. Your words wou'd mean something, I suppose! Another time, sir, I shall desire an explanation.

Lew. And why not now? I am no dealer in long sentences. A minute or two will do for me.

Stu. But not for me, sir. I am slow of apprehension, and must have time and privacy. A lady's presence engages my attention—Another morning I may be found at home.

Lew. Another morning then I'll wait upon you.

Stu. I shall expect you, sir. Madam, your servant.

[*Exit.*]

Char. What mean you by this?

Lew. To hint to him that I know him.

Char. How know him? mere doubt and supposition!

Lew. I shall have proof soon.

Char. And what then? wou'd you risk your life to be his punisher?

Lew. My life, madam! don't be afraid. And yet I am happy in your concern for me. But let it content you that I know this *Stakey*—'Twou'd be as easy to make him honest as brave,

Char. And what do you intend to do?

Lew. Nothing, till I have proof. Yet my suspicions are well grounded—but methinks, madam, I am acting here without authority. Cou'd I have leave to call Mr. *Beverly* brother, his concerns would be my own. Why will you make my services appear officious?

Char. You know my reasons, and shou'd not press me. But I am cold, you say; and cold I will be, while a poor sister's destitute—My heart bleeds for her! and 'till I see her sorrows moderated, love has no joys for me.

Lew. Can I be less a friend by being a brother? I would not say an unkind thing—but the pillar of your house is shaken. Prop it with another, and it shall stand firm again—You must comply.

Char. And will—when I have peace within myself. But let us change the subject—Your business here this morning

morning is with my sister. Misfortunes press too hard upon her: Yet till to-day she has borne 'em nobly.

Lew. Where is she?

Char. Gone to her chamber——Her spirits fail'd her.

Lew. I hear her coming—Let what has pass'd with *Stukely* be a secret——She has already too much to trouble her.

Enter Mrs. Beverley.

Mrs. Bev. Good morning, sir; I heard your voice, and, as I thought, enquiring for me——where's Mr. *Stukely*, *Charlotte*?

Char. This moment gone——You have been in tears, sister, but here's a friend shall comfort you.

Lew. Or if I add to your distresses, I'll beg your pardon, madam. The sale of your house and furniture was finish'd yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, sir. I know too your generous reason for putting me in mind of it. But you have obliged me too much already.

Lew. These are trifles, madam, which I know you have set a value on: those I have purchas'd, and will deliver. I have a friend too that esteems you—He has bought largely; and will call nothing his, till he has seen you. If a visit to him would not be painful, he has begg'd it may be this morning.

Mrs. Bev. Not painful in the least. My pain is from the kindness of my friends. Why am I to be oblig'd beyond the power of return?

Lew. You shall repay us at your own time. I have a coach waiting at the door—Shall we have your company, madam? [*To Char.*

Char. No. My brother may return soon; I'll stay and receive him.

Mrs. Bev. He may want a comforter, perhaps. But don't upbraid him, *Charlotte*. We sha'n't be absent long——Come, sir, since I must be so oblig'd.

Lew. 'Tis I that am oblig'd. An hour or less will be sufficient for us. We shall find you at home, madam?

[*To Char. and exit with Mrs. Bev.*
Char.

Char. Certainly. I have but little inclination to appear abroad—O! this brother! this brother! to what wretchedness has he reduced us! [Exit.]

SCENE changes to Stukely's Lodgings.

Enter Stukely.

Stu. That *Leawson* suspects me, 'tis too plain. Yet why shou'd he suspect me?—I appear the friend of *Beverley* as much as he.—But I am rich it seems—and so I am; thanks to another's folly and my own wisdom. To what use is wisdom, but to take advantage of the weak? This *Beverley's* my fool; I cheat him, and he calls me friend.—But more business must be done yet. His wife's jewels are unfold; so is the reversion of his uncle's estate. I must have these too—And then there's a treasure above all—I love his wife—Before she knew this *Beverley* I lov'd her; but, like a cringing fool, bow'd at a distance, while he stept in and won her—Never, never will I forgive him for't. My pride, as well as love, is wounded by this conquest. I must have vengeance. Those hints, this morning, were well thrown in—Already they have fasten'd on her. If jealousy shou'd weaken her affections, want may corrupt her virtue—My heart rejoices in the hope.—These jewels may do much. He shall demand 'em of her; which, when mine, shall be converted to special purposes—What now, *Bates*?

Enter Bates.

Bates. Is it a wonder then to see me? The forces are all in readiness, and only wait for orders. Where's *Beverley*?

Stu. At last night's rendezvous, waiting for me. Is *Dawson* with you?

Bates. Dress'd like a nobleman; with money in his pocket, and a set of dice that shall deceive the devil.

Stu. That fellow has a head to undo a nation. But for the rest, they are such low-manner'd, ill-looking dogs, I wonder *Beverley* has not suspected 'em.

Bates. No matter for manners and looks. Do you supply

supply 'em with money, and they are gentlemen by profession—The passion of gaming casts such a mist before the eyes, that the nobleman shall be surrounded with sharpers, and imagine himself in the best of company.

Stu. There's that *Williams*, too—It was he, I suppose, that call'd at *Beverley's* with the note this morning. What directions did you give him?

Bates. To knock loud, and be clamorous. Did not you see him?

Stu. No. The fool sneak'd off with *Jarvis*. Had he appear'd within doors, as directed, the note had been discharg'd. I waited there on purpose. I want the women to think well of me; for *Lewson's* grown suspicious; he told me so himself.

Bates. What answer did you make him?

Stu. A short one—That I wou'd see him soon, for farther explanation.

Bates. We must take care of him. But what have we to do with *Beverley*? *Dawson* and the rest are wondering at you.

Stu. Why, let 'em wonder. I have designs above their narrow reach. They see me lend him money; and they stare at me. But they are fools. I want him to believe me beggar'd by him.

Bates. And what then?

Stu. Ay, there's the question: but no matter. At night you may know more. He waits for me at *Wilson's*. I told the women where to find him.

Bates. To what purpose?

Stu. To save suspicion. It look'd friendly; and they thank'd me. Old *Jarvis* was dispatch'd to him.

Bates. And may intreat him home.

Stu. No; he expects money from me: but I'll have none. His wife's jewels must go—Women are easy creatures, and refuse nothing where they love—Follow to *Wilson's*; but be sure he sees you not. You are a man of character, you know; of prudence and discretion. Wait for me in an outer room; I shall have business for you presently. Come, sir.

Let

THE GAMESTER.

17

*Let drudging fools by honesty grow great:
The shorter road to riches is deceit.*

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T II.

S C E N E *a Gaming House, with a Table, Box,
Dice, &c.*

Beverley is discover'd sitting.

Bev. **W**HY, what a world is this! The slave that
digs for gold receives his daily pittance,
and sleeps contented; while those for whom he la-
bours convert their good to mischief; making abun-
dant the means of want. O shame! shame!—Had
fortune given me but a little, that little had been still
my own. But plenty leads to waste; and shallow
streams maintain their currents, while swelling rivers
beat down their banks, and leave their channels empty.
What had I to do with play? I wanted nothing. My
wishes and my means were equal. The poor follow'd
me with blessings; love scatter'd roses on my pil-
low; and morning wak'd me to delight.—O bitter
thought! that leads to what I was, by what I am! I
wou'd forget both—Who's there?

Enter Waiter.

Wait. A gentleman, sir, enquires for you.

Bev. He might have us'd less ceremony. *Stukely,*
I suppose.

Wait. No, sir, a stranger.

Bev. Well, shew him in.

[*Exit Waiter.*]

A messenger from *Stukely*; then! from him that has
undone me!—Yet all in friendship; and now he
lends me from his little, to bring back Fortune to me.

Enter Jarvis.

Jarvis! Why this intrusion?—Your absence had
been kinder.

Jar. I came in duty, sir. If it be troublesome—

Bev. It is—I wou'd be private—hid even from
myself. Who sent you hither?

Jar.

Jar. One that wou'd persuade you home again. My mistress is not well; her tears told me so.

Bev. Go with thy duty there then—— But does 'she weep? I am to blame to let her weep.' Pr'ythee be gone: I have no business for thee.

Jar. Yes, sir; to lead you from this place. I am your servant still. Your prosperous fortune bless'd my old age. If that has left you, I must not leave you,

Bev. Not leave me! Recall past time then; or through this sea of storms and darkness, shew me a star to guide me—— But what can'st thou?

Jar. The little that I can, I will. You have been generous to me—I wou'd not offend you, sir,—but—

Bev. No. Think'st thou I'd ruin thee too! I have enough of shame already—— My wife! My wife! Wou'd'st thou believe it, *Jarvis*? I have not seen her all this long night——I, who have lov'd her so, that every hour of absence seem'd as a gap in life. But other bonds have held me——O! I have play'd the boy! dropping my counters in the stream, and reaching to redeem 'em, have lost myself. Why wilt 'thou follow misery? Or, if thou wilt, go to thy mistress; she has no guilt to sting her, and therefore 'may be comforted.'

Jar. For pity's sake, sir!——I have no heart to see this change.

Bev. Nor I to bear it——How speaks the world of me, *Jarvis*?

Jar. As of a good man dead. Of one who, walking in a dream, fell down a precipice. The world is sorry for you.

Bev. Ay, and pities me. Says it not so? But I was born to infamy——I'll tell thee what it says. It calls me villain; a treacherous husband; a cruel father; a false brother; one lost to nature and her charities. Or, to say all in one short word, it calls me——Gamester. Go to thy mistress—I'll see her presently.

Jar. And why not now? Rude people press upon her; loud, bawling creditors; wretches who know no pity—I met one at the door; he would have seen my mistress.

mistress. I wanted means of present payment, so promis'd it to-morrow. But others may be pressing; and she has grief enough already. Your absence hangs too heavy on her.

Bev. Tell her I'll come, then. I have a moment's business. But what hast thou to do with my mistress? Thy honesty has left thee poor; and age wants comfort. Keep what thou hast 'for cordials'; lest, between thee and the grave, misery steal in. I have a friend shall counsel me—This is that friend.

Enter Stukely.

Stu. How fares it, *Beverley*? Honest *Mr. Jarvis*, well met; I hop'd to find you here. That viper *Williams*! Was it not he that troubled you this morning?

Jar. My mistress heard him then?—I am sorry that she heard him.

Bev. And *Jarvis* promis'd payment.

Stu. That must not be. Tell him I'll satisfy him.

Jar. Will you, sir? Heaven will reward you for't.

Bev. Generous *Stukely*! Friendship like yours, had it ability like will, wou'd more than balance the wrongs of Fortune.

Stu. You think too kindly of me—Make haste to *Williams*; his clamours may be rude else. [*To Jar.*

Jar. And my master will go home again—Alas! sir, we know of hearts there breaking for his absence.

[*Exit.*

Bev. Wou'd I were dead!

Stu. 'Or turn'd hermit; counting a string of beads
' in a dark cave; or under a weeping willow, praying
' for mercy on the wicked.' Ha! ha! ha!—Pr'ythee be a man, and leave dying to disease and old age.—Fortune may be ours again; at least we'll try for't.

Bev. No; it has fool'd us on too far.

Stu. Ay, ruin'd us; and therefore we'll sit down contented. These are the despondings of men without money; but let the shining ore chink in the pocket, and folly turns to wisdom. We are Fortune's children—True, she's a fickle mother; but shall we droop because she's peevish?—No; she has smiles in

in store; and these her frowns are meant to brighten 'em.

Rev. Is this a time for levity? But you are single in the ruin, and therefore may talk lightly of it. With me 'tis complicated misery.

Stu. You censure me unjustly—I but assumed these spirits to cheer my friend. Heaven knows, he wants a comforter.

Rev. What new misfortune?

Stu. I wou'd have brought you money; but lenders want securities. What's to be done? All that was mine is your's already.

Rev. And there's the double weight that sinks me, I have undone my friend too; one, who to save a drowning wretch, reach'd out his hand, and perish'd with him.

Stu. Have better thoughts.

Rev. Whence are they to proceed? I have nothing left.

Stu. [*Sighing*] Then we're indeed undone. What nothing? No moveables? Nor useless trinkets? Bubles lock'd up in caskets to starve their owners?—I have ventur'd deeply for you.

Rev. Therefore this heart-ake; for I am left beyond all hope.

Stu. No; means may be found to save us. *Jarvis* is rich. Who made him so? This is no time for ceremony.

Rev. And is it for dishonesty? The good old man! Shall I rob him too? My friend wou'd grieve for't. No; let the little that he has buy food and cloathing for him.

Stu. Good morning, then. [*Going*]

Rev. So hasty! Why then good morning.

Stu. And when we meet again, upbraid me. Say it was I that tempted you. Tell *Leeson* so; and tell him I have wrong'd you—He has suspicions of me, and will thank you.

Rev. No; we have been companions in a rash voyage, and the same storm has wreck'd us both. Mine shall be self-upbraidings.

Stu.

Stu. And will they feed us? You deal unkindly by me. I have sold and borrow'd for you, while land or credit lasted; and now, when Fortune should be try'd, and my heart whispers me success, I am deserted; turn'd loose to beggary, while you have hoards.

Bew. What hoards? Name 'em, and take em.

Stu. Jewels.

Bew. And shall this thriftless hand seize them too? My poor, poor wife! Must she lose all? I wou'd not wound her so.

Stu. Nor I, but from necessity. One effort more, and Fortune may grow kind. I have unusual hopes.

Bew. Think of some other means, then.

Stu. I have; and you rejected 'em.

Bew. Pr'ythee let me be a man.

Stu. Ay, and your friend a poor one. But I have done. And for these trinkets of a woman, why, let her keep 'em to deck out pride with, and shew a laughing world that she has finery to starve in.

Bew. No; she shall yield up all. My friend demands it. But need he have talk'd lightly of her? The jewels that she values are truth and innocence. Those will adorn her ever; and for the rest, she wore 'em for a husband's pride, and to his wants will give 'em. Alas! you know her not. Where shall we meet?

Stu. No matter. I have chang'd my mind. Leave me to a prison: 'tis the reward of friendship.

Bew. Perish mankind first—Leave you to a prison! No; fallen as you see me, I'm not that wretch. Nor wou'd I change this heart, o'ercharg'd as 'tis with folly and misfortune, for one more prudent and most happy, if callous to a friend's distresses.

Stu. You are too warm.

Bew. In such a cause, not to be warm is to be frozen. Farewell. I'll meet you at your lodgings.

Stu. Reflect a little. The jewels may be lost. Better not hazard 'em—I was too pressing.

Bew. And I ungrateful. Reflection takes up time. I have no leisure for't. Within an hour expect me.

[Exit Bew.]

Stu.

Stu. The thoughtless, shallow prodigal! We shall have sport at night, then—But hold—The jewels are not ours yet—The lady may refuse 'em—The husband may relent too—'Tis more than probable—I'll write a note to *Beverley*, and the contents shall spur him to demand 'em—But am I grown this rogue thro' avarice? No; I have warmer motives, love and revenge—Ruin the husband, and the wife's virtue may be bid for. 'Tis of uncertain value, and sinks, or rises in the purchase, as want, or wealth, or passion governs. The poor part cheaply with it; rich dames, tho' pleas'd with selling, will have high prices for't. Your love-sick girls give it for oaths and lying. But tender wives, who boast of honour and affections, keep it against famine—Why, let famine come then; I am in haste to purchase.'

Enter Bates.

Look to your men, *Bates*; there's money stirring. We meet to-night upon this spot. Hasten and tell 'em so. *Beverley* calls upon me at my lodgings, and we return together. Hasten, I say, the rogues will scatter else.

Bates. Not 'till their leader bids 'em.

Stu. Come on, then. Give 'em the word, and follow me; I must advise with you—This is a day of business. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE changes to *Beverley's Lodgings.*

Enter Beverley and Charlotte.

Char. Your looks are chang'd, too; there's wildness in 'em. My wretched sister! How will it grieve her to see you thus!

Bew. No, no—a little rest will ease me. And for your *Leuwson's* kindness to her, it has my thanks; I have no more to give him.

Char. Yes; a sister and her fortune. I trifle with him, and he complains—My looks, he says, are cold upon him. He thinks too—

Bew. That I have lost your fortune—He dares not think so.

Char.

Char. Nor does he—You are too quick at guessing. He cares not if you had. That care is mine—I lent it you to husband, and now I claim it.

Bew. You have suspicions, then?

Char. Cure 'em, and give it me.

Bew. To stop a sister's chiding.

Char. To vindicate her brother.

Bew. How if he needs no vindication?

Char. I wou'd fain hope so.

Bew. Ay, wou'd and cannot. Leave it to time, then; 'twill satisfy all doubts.

Char. Mine are already satisfy'd.

Bew. 'Tis well. And when the subject is renew'd, speak to me like a sister, and I will answer like a brother.

Char. To tell me I'm a beggar.—Why, tell it now. I that can bear the ruin of those dearer to me, the ruin of a sister and her infant, can bear that too.

Bew. No more of this—you wring my heart.

Char. Wou'd that the misery were all your own! But innocence must suffer—Unthinking rioter! whose home was heaven to him; an angel dwelt there, and a little cherub, that crown'd his days with blessings—How he has lost this heaven to league with devils!

Bew. Forbear, I say; reproaches come too late; they search, but cure not: and for the fortune you demand, we'll talk to-morrow on't; our tempers may be milder.

Char. Or, if 'tis gone, why farewell all. I claim'd it for a sister. 'She holds my heart in her's; and 'every pang she feels tears it in pieces'—But I'll upbraid no more. What Heaven permits, perhaps it may ordain; 'and sorrow then is sinful.' Yet that the husband! father! brother! should be its instruments of vengeance!—'Tis grievous to know that.

Bew. If you're my sister, spare the remembrance—it wounds too deeply. To-morrow shall clear all; and when the worst is known, it may be better than your fears. Comfort my wife; and for the pains of absence, I'll make atonement. The world may yet go well with us.

Char.

Char. See where she comes!—Look chearfully upon her—Affections such as her's are prying, and lend those eyes that read the soul.

Enter Mrs. Beverley and Lewson.

Mrs. Bev. My life!

Bev. My love! how fares it? I have been a truant husband.

Mrs. Bev. But we meet now, and that heals all—Doubts and alarms I have had; but in this dear embrace I bury and forget 'em—My friend here (*pointing to Lewson*) has been indeed a friend. *Charlotte*, 'tis you must thank him: your brother's thanks and mine are of too little value.

Bev. Yet what we have we'll pay. I thank you, sir, and am obliged. I wou'd say more, but that your goodness to the wife upbraids the husband's follies. Had I been wise, she had not trespass'd on your bounty.

Lew. Nor has she trespass'd. The little I have done, acceptance over-pays.

Char. So friendship thinks—

Mrs. Bev. And double obligations by striving to conceal 'em—We'll talk another time on't.—You are too thoughtful, love.

Bev. No, I have reason for these thoughts.

Char. And hatred for the cause—Wou'd you had that, too!

Bev. I have—The cause was avarice.

Char. And who the tempter?

Bev. A ruin'd friend—ruin'd by too much kindness.

Lew. Ay, worse than ruin'd; stab'd in his fame, mortally stab'd—Riches can't cure him.

Bev. Or, if they cou'd, those I have drain'd him of. Something of this he hinted in the morning—That *Lewson* had suspicions of him—Why these suspicions?

[Angrily.]

Lew. At school we knew this *Stukely*. A cunning plodding boy, he was, sordid and cruel, slow at his task, but quick at shifts and tricking. He schem'd

out

out mischief, that others might be punish'd; and wou'd tell his tale with so much art, that for the last he merited, rewards and praise were given him. Shew me a boy with such a mind, and time, that ripens manhood in him, shall ripen vice too—I'll prove him, and lay him open t'you—"Till then be warn'd—I know him, and therefore shun him.

Bev. As I wou'd those that wrong him—You are too busy, sir.

Mrs. Bev. No, not too busy—Mistaken, perhaps—That had been milder.

Lew. No matter, madam. I can bear this, and praise the heart that prompts it—Pity such friendship shou'd be so plac'd!

Bev. Again, sir! but I'll bear too—You wrong him, *Lewson*, and will be sorry for't.

Char. Ay, when 'tis prov'd he wrongs him. The world is full of hypocrites.

Bev. And *Stukely* one—so you'd infer, I think—I'll hear no more of this—my heart akes for him—I have undone him.

Lew. The world says otherwise.

Bev. The world is false then—I have business with you, love, [*to Mrs. Bev.*] we'll leave 'em to their rancour.

[*Going.*]

Char. No. We shall find room within for't.—Come this way, sir.

[*To Lewson.*]

Lew. Another time my friend will thank me; that time is hastening too.

[*Ex. Lew. and Char.*]

Bev. They hurt me beyond bearing—Is *Stukely* false? then honesty has left us! 'twere finning against Heaven to think so.

Mrs. Bev. I never doubted him.

Bev. No; you are charity. Meekness and ever-during patience live in that heart, and love that knows no change—Why did I ruin you?

Mrs. Bev. You have not ruin'd me. I have no wants when you are present, nor wishes in your absence but to be blest with your return. Be but resign'd to what has happen'd, and I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

Bev. My generous girl!—But memory will be busy; still crowding on my thoughts, to sour the present by the past. I have another pang too.

Mrs. Bev. Tell it, and let me cure it.

Bev. That friend—that generous friend, whose fame they have traduc'd—I have undone him too. While he had means, he lent me largely; and now a prison must be his portion.

Mrs. Bev. No; I hope otherwise.

Bev. To hope must be to act. The charitable with feeds not the hungry—Something must be done.

Mrs. Bev. What?

Bev. In bitterness of heart he told me, just now he told me, I had undone him. Cou'd I hear that, and think of happiness? no; I have disclaim'd it, while he is miserable.

Mrs. Bev. The world may mend with us, and then we may be grateful. There's comfort in that hope.

Bev. Ay; 'tis the sick man's cordial, his promis'd cure; while in preparing it the patient dies.—What now?

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. A letter, sir.

[Delivers it and ex.

Bev. The hand is *Stukely's*.

[Opens it and reads it to himself.

Mrs. Bev. And brings good news—at least I'll hope so—What says he, love?

Bev. Why this—too much for patience. Yet he directs me to conceal it from you. *[Reads.*

Let your haste to see me be the only proof of your esteem for me. I have determin'd, since we parted, to bid adieu to England; chusing rather to forsake my country, than to owe my freedom in it to the means we talk'd of. Keep this a secret at home, and hasten to the ruin'd

R. Stukely.

Ruin'd by friendship! I must relieve or follow him!

Mrs. Bev. Follow him, did you say? then I am lost indeed!

Bev.

Bev. O this infernal vice! how has it sunk me! a vice, whose highest joy was poor to my domestic happiness. Yet how have I pursu'd it! turn'd all my comforts to bitterest pangs! and all my smiles to tears. Damn'd, damn'd infatuation!

Mrs. Bev. Be cool, my life! what are the means the letter talks of? have you—have I those means? tell me, and ease me. I have no life while you are wretched.

Bev. No, no; it must not be. 'Tis I alone have sinn'd; 'tis I alone must suffer. You shall reserve those means to keep my child and his wrong'd mother from want and wretchedness.

Mrs. Bev. What means?

Bev. I came to rob you of 'em—but cannot—dare not—Those jewels are your sole support—I should be more than monster to request 'em.

Mrs. Bev. My jewels! trifles, not worth the speaking of, if weigh'd against a husband's peace; but let 'em purchase that, and the world's wealth is of less value.

Bev. Amazing goodness! how little do I seem before such virtues!

Mrs. Bev. No more, my love. I kept 'em till occasion call'd to use 'em; now is the occasion, and I'll resign 'em chearfully.

Bev. Why we'll be rich in love then. 'But this excess of kindness melts me. Yet for a friend one wou'd do much—He has deny'd me nothing.'

Mrs. Bev. Come to my closet—But let him manage wisely. We have no more to give him.

Bev. Where learnt my love this excellence?—'Tis 'Heaven's own teaching: that Heaven, which to an angel's form has given a mind more lovely.' I am unworthy of you, but will deserve you better.

*Henceforth my follies and neglects shall cease,
And all to come be penitence and peace;*

*Vice shall no more attract me with her charms,
Nor pleasure reach me, but in these dear arms.*

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T III.

SCENE Stukely's Lodgings.

Enter Stukely and Bates.

Stu. SO runs the world, *Bates*. Fools are the natural prey of knaves; Nature design'd them so, when she made lambs for wolves. The laws that fear and policy have fram'd, Nature disclaims: she knows but two; and those are force and cunning. The nobler law is force; but then there's danger in't; while cunning, like a skilful miner, works safely and unseen.

Bates. And therefore wisely. Force must have nerves and sinews; cunning wants neither. The dwarf that has it shall trip the giant's heels up.

Stu. And bind him to the ground. Why, we'll erect a shrine for Nature, and be her oracles. Conscience is weakness; fear made it, and fear maintains it. The dread of shame, inward reproaches, and fictitious burnings, swell out the phantom. Nature knows none of this: her laws are freedom.

Bates. Sound doctrine, and well deliver'd!

Stu. We are sincere too, and practise what we teach. Let the grave pedant say as much.—But now to business. The jewels are dispos'd of; and *Beverley* again worth money. He waits to count his gold out, and then comes hither. If my design succeeds, this night we finish with him. Go to your lodgings, and be busy—You understand conveyances, and can make ruin sure.

Bates. Better stop here. The sale of this reversion may be talk'd of.—There's danger in't.

Stu. No, 'tis the mark I aim at. We'll thrive and laugh. You are the purchaser, and there's the payment

payment. [*Giving a pocket-book*] He thinks you rich; and so you shall be. Enquire for titles, and deal hardly; 'twill look like honesty.

Bates. How if he suspects us?

Stu. Leave it to me. I study hearts, and when to work upon 'em. Go to your lodgings; and if we come, be busy over papers. Talk of a thoughtless age, of gaming and extravagance; you have a face for't.

Bates. A feeling too that wou'd avoid it. We push too far; but I have caution'd you. If it ends ill, you'll think of me—and so adieu. [*Exit.*]

Stu. This fellow sins by halves; his fears are conscience to him. I'll turn these fears to use. Rogues that dread shame, will still be greater rogues to hide their guilt—This shall be thought of. *Lewson* grows troublesome—We must get rid of him—He knows too much. I have a tale for *Beverley*; part of it truth too—He shall call *Lewson* to account—If it succeeds, 'tis well; if not, we must try other means.—But here he comes—I must dissemble.

Enter Beverley.

Look to the door there [*in a seeming fright*]—My friend! I thought of other visitors.

Bew. No; these shall guard you from 'em—
[*Offering notes*] Take 'em, and use 'em cautiously—
The world deals hardly by us.

Stu. And shall I leave you destitute? No: your wants are greatest. Another climate may treat me kinder. The shelter of to-night takes me from this.

Bew. Let these be your support then—Yet is there need of parting? I may have means again; we'll share 'em, and live wisely.

Stu. No. I shou'd tempt you on. Habit is nature in me; ruin can't cure it. Even now I wou'd be gaming. Taught by experience as I am, and knowing this poor sum is all that's left us, I am for venturing still—And say I am to blame—Yet will this little supply our wants? No, we must put it out to usury. Whether 'tis madness in me, or some restless

impulse of good fortune, I yet am ignorant; but——

Bew. Take it, and succeed then. I'll try no more.

Stu. 'Tis surely impulse; it pleads so strongly——
But you are cold—We'll e'en part here then. And
for this last reserve, keep it for better uses; I'll have
none on't. I thank you tho', and will seek fortune
singly—One thing I had forgot——

Bew. What is it?

Stu. Perhaps 'twere best forgotten. But I am open
in my nature, and zealous for the honour of my friend
—*Lewson* speaks freely of you.

Bew. Of you I know he does.

Stu. I can forgive him for't; but for my friend I'm
angry.

Bew. What says he of me?

Stu. That *Charlotte's* fortune is embezzled—He
talks on't loudly.

Bew. He shall be silenc'd then—How heard you of
it?

Stu. From many. He question'd *Bates* about it.
You must account with him, he says.

Bew. Or he with me—and soon too.

Stu. Speak mildly to him. Cautions are best.

Bew. I'll think on't. But whither go you?

Stu. From poverty and prisons—No matter whither;
If fortune changes, you may hear from me.

Bew. May these be prosperous then. [*offering the
notes, which he refuses*] Nay, they are your's—I
have sworn it, and will have nothing—Take 'em
and use 'em.

Stu. Singly I will not. My cares are for my friend;
for his lost fortune, and ruin'd family. All separate
interests I disclaim. Together we have fall'n—to-
gether we must rise. My heart, my honour, and affec-
tions, all will have it so.

Bew. I am weary of being fool'd.

Stu. And so am I—Here let us part then—These
bodings of good-fortune shall all be stifled; I'll call
'em folly, and forget 'em—This one embrace, and then
farewell.

[*Offering to embrace.*

Bew.

Bew. No ; stay a moment—How my poor heart's distracted ! I have these bodings too ; but whether caught from you, or prompted by my good or evil genius, I know not—the trial shall determine—And yet, my wife—

Stu. Ay, ay, she'll chide.

Bew. No ; my chidings are all here.

[*Pointing to his heart.*]

Stu. I'll not persuade you.

Bew. I am persuaded ; by reason too, the strongest reason, necessity. Oh ! cou'd I but regain the height I have fallen from, Heaven shou'd forsake me in my latest hour, if I again mix'd in these scenes, or sacrific'd the husband's peace, his joy, and best affections, to avarice and infamy.

Stu. I have resolv'd like you ; and since our motives are so honest, why shou'd we fear success ?

Bew. Come on, then—Where shall we meet ?

Stu. At *Wilson's*—Yet if it hurts you, leave me : I have misled you often.

Bew. We have misled each other—But come ! Fortune is fickle, and may be tir'd with plaguing us—There let us rest our hopes.

Stu. Yet think a little—

Bew. I cannot—thinking but distracts me.

When desperation leads, all thoughts are vain ;

Reason would lose, what rashness may obtain. [Exit.]

SCENE changes to *Beverley's Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Beverley and Charlotte.

Char. 'Twas all a scheme, a mean one ; unworthy of my brother.

Mrs. Bew. No, I am sure it was not—*Stukely* is honest too ; I know he is—This madness has undone 'em both.

Char. My brother irrecoverably—You are too spiritless a wife—A mournful tale, mixt with a few kind words, will steal away your soul. The world's too subtle for such goodness. Had I been by, he shou'd

have ask'd your life sooner than those jewels.

Mrs. Bev. He shou'd have had it, then. (*warmly*) I live but to oblige him. She who can love, and is belov'd like me, will do as much. Men have done more for mistresses, and women for a base deluder: and shall a wife do less? Your chidings hurt me, Charlotte.

Char. And come too late; they might have sav'd you else. How cou'd he use you so?

Mrs. Bev. 'Twas friendship did it. His heart was breaking for a friend.

Char. The friend that has betray'd him.

Mrs. Bev. Pr'ythee don't think so.

Char. To-morrow he accounts with me.

Mrs. Bev. And fairly — I will not doubt it.

Char. Unless a friend has wanted — I have no patience — Sister! Sister! we are bound to curse this friend.

Mrs. Bev. My *Beverley* speaks nobly of him.

Char. And *Lewson* truly — But I displease you with this talk. — To-morrow will instruct us.

Mrs. Bev. Stay till it comes then — I wou'd not think so hardly.

Char. Nor I, but from conviction — Yet we have hope of better days. My uncle is infirm, and of an age that threatens hourly — Or, if he lives, you never have offended him; and for distresses so unmerited he will have pity.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, and am chearful. We have no more to lose; and for what's gone, if it brings prudence home, the purchase was well made.

Char. My *Lewson* will be kind too. While he and I have life and means, you shall divide with us — And see, he's here!

Enter Lewson.

We were just speaking of you.

Lew. 'Tis best to interrupt you then. Few characters will bear a scrutiny; and where the bad outweighs the good, he's safest that's least talked of. What say you, Madam?

[*To Charlotte.*

Char.

Char. That I hate scandal, tho' a woman—therefore talk seldom of you.

Mrs. Bev. Or, with more truth, that, tho' a woman, she loves to praise—therefore talks always of you. I'll leave you to decide it. [*Exit.*]

Lew. How good and amiable! I came to talk in private with you; of matters that concern you.

Char. What matters?

Lew. First answer me sincerely to what I ask.

Char. I will — But you alarm me.

Lew. I am too grave perhaps; but be assur'd of this, I have no news that troubles me, and therefore shou'd not you.

Char. I am easy then—Propose your question.

Lew. 'Tis now a tedious twelve-month, since with an open and kind heart you said you lov'd me.

Char. So tedious, did you say?

Lew. And when, in consequence of such sweet words, I press'd for marriage, you gave a voluntary promise that you wou'd live for me.

Char. You think me chang'd then? [*Angrily.*]

Lew. I did not say so. A thousand times I have press'd for the performance of this promise: but private cares, a brother's and a sister's ruin, were reasons for delaying it.

Char. I had no other reasons.—Where will this end?

Lew. It shall end presently.

Char. Go on, sir.

Lew. A promise such as this, given freely, not extorted, the world thinks binding; but I think otherwise.

Char. And wou'd release me from it?

Lew. You are too impatient, madam.

Char. Cool, sir—quite cool—Pray go on.

Lew. Time and a near acquaintance with my faults may have wrought change—if it be so; or for a moment if you have wish'd this promise were unmade, here I acquit you of it—This is my question then; and with such plainness as I ask it, I shall entreat an answer—Have you repented of this promise?

Char. Stay, fir. The man that can suspect me shall find me chang'd—Why am I doubted?

Lew. My doubts are of myself. I have my faults, and you have observation. If from my temper, my words, or actions, you have conceiv'd a thought against me, or even a wish for separation, all that has pass'd is nothing.

Char. You startle me—But tell me—I must be answered first—Is it from honour you speak this? Or do you wish me chang'd?

Lew. Heaven knows I do not. Life and my *Charlotte* are so connected, that to lose one, were loss of both. Yet for a promise, tho' given in love, and meant for binding; if time, or accident, or reason, shou'd change opinion—with me that promise has no force.

Char. Why, now I'll answer you. Your doubts are prophecies—I am really chang'd.

Lew. Indeed!

Char. I cou'd torment you now, as you have me: but it is not in my nature—That I am chang'd, I own: for what at first was inclination, is now grown reason in me; and from that reason, had I the world, nay, were I poorer than the poorest, and you too wanting bread, with but a hovel to invite me to—I wou'd be your's, and happy.

Lew. My kindest *Charlotte*! [*Taking her hand*] thanks are too poor for this—and words too weak! but if we love so, why shou'd our union be delay'd?

Char. For happier times. The present are too wretched.

Lew. I may have reasons that press it now.

Char. What reasons?

Lew. The strongest reasons; unanswerable ones.

Char. Be quick and name 'em.

Lew. No, madam; I am bound in honour to make conditions first—I am bound by inclination too. This sweet profusion of kind words pains while it pleases. I dread the losing you!

Char. Astonishment! what mean you?

Lew.

Lew. First promise, that to-morrow, or the next day, you will be mine for ever.

Char. I do——tho' misery shou'd succeed.

Lew. Thus then I seize you! and with you every joy on this side heaven!

Char. And thus I seal my promise. [*embracing him.*] Now, fir, your secret?

Lew. Your fortune's lost.

Char. My fortune lost! I'll study to be humble then. But was my promise claim'd for this? How nobly generous! where learnt you this sad news?

Lew. From *Bates*, *Stukely's* prime agent. I have oblig'd him, and he's grateful—He told it me in friendship, to warn me from my *Charlotte*.

Char. 'Twas honest in him, and I'll esteem him for't.

Lew. He knows much more than he has told.

Char. For me it is enough. And for your generous love, I thank you from my soul. If you'd oblige me more, give me a little time.

Lew. Why time? It robs us of our happiness.

Char. I have a task to learn first. The little pride this fortune gave me must be subdu'd. Once we were equal; and might have met obliging and oblig'd: but now 'tis otherwise; and for a life of obligations, I have not learnt to bear it.

Lew. Mine is that life. You are too noble.

Char. Leave me to think on't.

Lew. To-morrow then you'll fix my happiness?

Char. All that I can, I will.

Lew. It must be so; we live but for each other. Keep what you know a secret; and when we meet to-morrow more may be known.—Farewell. [*Exit.*

Char. My poor, poor sister! how would this wound her! but I'll conceal it, and speak comfort to her. [*Exit.*

SCENE changes to a room in the Gaming-house.

Enter *Beverley* and *Stukely*.

Bew. Whither wou'd you lead me?

[*Angrily.*
Stu.

Stu. Where we may vent our curses.

Bev. Ay, on yourself, and those damn'd counsels that have destroy'd me. A thousand fiends were in that bosom, and all let loose to tempt me—I had resisted else.

Stu. Go on, sir—I have deserv'd this from you.

Bev. And curses everlasting—Time is too scanty for 'em—

Stu. What have I done?

Bev. What the arch-devil of old did—sooth'd with false hopes, for certain ruin.

Stu. Myself unhurt; nay, pleas'd at your destruction—So your words mean. Why; tell it to the world. I am too poor to find a friend in't.

Bev. A friend? what's he? I had a friend.

Stu. And have one still.

Bev. Ay; I'll tell you of this friend. He found me happiest of the happy. Fortune and honour crown'd me; and love and peace liv'd in my heart. One spark of folly lurk'd there, that too he found; and by deceitful breath blew it to flames that have consum'd me. This friend were you to me.

Stu. A little more, perhaps—The friend who gave his all to save you; and, not succeeding, chose ruin with you. But no matter, I have undone you, and am a villain.

Bev. No; I think not—The villains are within,

Stu. What villains?

Bev. *Darwson* and the rest—We have been dupes to sharpers.

Stu. How know you this? I have had doubts as well as you; yet still as fortune chang'd I blush'd at my own thoughts—But you have proofs, perhaps.

Bev. Ay, damn'd ones. Repeated losses—Night after night, and no reverse—Chance has no hand in this.

Stu. I think more charitably; yet I am peevish in my nature, and apt to doubt—The world speaks fairly of this *Darwson*, so does it of the rest. We have watch'd 'em closely too. But 'tis a right usurp'd by losers,

losers, to think the winners knaves—We'll have more manhood in us.

Bev. I know not what to think. This night has flung me to the quick—Blasted my reputation too—I have bound my honour to these vipers; play'd meanly upon credit, 'till I tir'd 'em; and now they shun me to rifle one another. What's to be done?

Stu. Nothing. My counsels have been fatal.

Bev. By Heaven I'll not survive this shame—Traitor! 'tis you have brought it on me. [*Taking hold of him.*] Shew me the means to save me, or I'll commit a murder here, and next upon myself.

Stu. Why do it then, and rid me of ingratitude.

Bev. Pr'ythee forgive this language—I speak I know not what—Rage and despair are in my heart, and hurry me to madness. My home is horror to me—I'll not return to't. Speak quickly; tell me if, in this wreck of fortune, one hope remains? Name it, and be my oracle.

Stu. To vent your curses on—You have bestow'd 'em liberally. Take your own counsel: and shou'd a desperate hope present itself, 'twill suit your desperate fortune. I'll not advise you.

Bev. What hope? by Heaven I'll catch at it, however desperate. I am so sunk in misery, it cannot lay me lower.

Stu. You have an uncle.

Bev. Ay, what of him?

Stu. Old men live long by temperance; while their heirs starve on expectation.

Bev. What mean you?

Stu. That the reversion of his estate is your's; and will bring money to pay debts with—Nay more, it may retrieve what's past.

Bev. Or leave my child a beggar.

Stu. And what's his father? A dishonourable one; engag'd for sums he cannot pay—That shou'd be thought of.

Bev. It is my shame—The poison that inflames me. Where shall we go? To whom? I am impatient 'till all's lost.

Stu.

Stu. All may be your's again—Your man is *Bates*—He has large funds at his command, and will deal justly by you.

Bew. I am resolv'd——Tell 'em within we'll meet 'em presently; and with full purses too—Come, follow me.

Stu. No. I'll have no hand in this; nor do I counsel it—Use your discretion, and act from that. You'll find me at my lodgings.

Bew. Succeed what will, this night I'll dare the worst.

'Tis loss of fear, to be compleatly curs'd.

[*Exit Bew.*]

Stu. Why, lose it then for ever—Fear is the mind's worst evil; and 'tis a friendly office to drive it from the bosom—Thus far has Fortune crown'd me—Yet *Beverley* is rich; rich in his wife's best treasure, her honour and affections. I wou'd supplant him there too. But 'tis the curse of thinking minds to raise up difficulties. Fools only conquer women: fearless of dangers which they see not, they press on boldly, and by persisting prosper. Yet may a tale of art do much——*Charlotte* is sometimes absent. The seeds of jealousy are sown already. If I mistake not, they have taken root too. Now is the time to ripen 'em, and reap the harvest. The softest of her sex, if wrong'd in love, or thinking that she's wrong'd, becomes a tygress in revenge—I'll instantly to *Beverley's*—No matter for the danger—When beauty leads us on, 'tis indiscretion to reflect, and cowardice to doubt.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE changes to *Beverley's lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Beverley and Lucy.

Mrs. Bew. Did *Charlotte* tell you any thing?

Lucy. No, madam.

Mrs. Bew. She look'd confus'd, methought; said she had business with her *Lewson*; which, when I press'd to know, tears only were her answer.

Lu. She seem'd in haste too—Yet her return may bring you comfort.

Mrs. Bev. No, my kind girl; I was not born for't—But why do I distress thee? Thy sympathizing heart bleeds for the ills of others—What pity that thy mistress can't reward thee! but there's a Power above, that sees, and will remember all. 'Pr'ythee sooth me with the song thou sung'st last night. It suits this change of fortune, and there's a melancholy in't that pleases me.

Lu. I fear it hurts you, madam—Your goodness too draws tears from me—But I'll dry 'em, and obey you.

S O N G.

I.

- *When Damon languish'd at my feet,*
- *And I believ'd him true,*
- *The moments of delight how sweet!*
- *But, ah! how swift they flew!*
- *The sunny hill, the flow'ry vale,*
- *The garden and the grove,*
- *Have echo'd to his ardent tale,*
- *And vows of endless love.*

II.

- *The conquest gain'd, he left his prize,*
- *He left her to complain;*
- *To talk of joy with weeping eyes,*
- *And measure time by pain.*
- *But Heav'n will take the mourner's part,*
- *In pity to despair;*
- *And the last sigh that rends the heart,*
- *Shall waft the spirit there.*

Mrs. Bev. I thank thee, *Lucy*—I thank Heav'n, too, my griefs are none of these. Yet *Stukely* deals in hints—He talks of rumour.—I'll urge him to speak plainly.—[Knocking.] Hark! there's some one entering.

Lu. Perhaps my master, madam,

[Exit.
Mrs.]

Mrs. Bev. Let him be well too, and I am satisfy'd.
[Goes to the door and listens.] No; 'tis another's voice;
 his had been music to me. Who is it, Lucy?

Re-enter Lucy with Stukely.

Lu. Mr. Stukely, madam. *[Exit.]*

Stu. To meet you thus alone, madam, was what I wish'd. Unseasonable visits, when friendship warrants 'em, need no excuse.—Therefore I make none.

Mrs. Bev. What mean you, sir? And where's your friend?

Stu. Men may have secrets, madam, which their best friends are not admitted to. We parted in the morning, not soon to meet again.

Mrs. Bev. You mean to leave us then? to leave your country, too? I am no stranger to your reasons, and pity your misfortunes.

Stu. Your pity has undone you. Could *Beverley* do this? That letter was a false one; a mean contrivance to rob you of your jewels—I wrote it not.

Mrs. Bev. Impossible! whence came it then?

Stu. Wrong'd as I am, madam, I must speak plainly—

Mrs. Bev. Do so, and ease me. Your hints have troubled me. Reports, you say, are stirring—Reports of whom? You wish'd me not to credit 'em. What, sir, are these reports?

Stu. I thought 'em slander, madam; and caution'd you in friendship; lest from officious tongues the tale had reach'd you with double aggravation.

Mrs. Bev. Proceed, sir.

Stu. It is a debt due to my fame, due to an injur'd wife too—We both are injur'd.

Mrs. Bev. How injur'd? and who has injur'd us?

Stu. My friend, your husband.

Mrs. Bev. You wou'd resent for both then? But know, sir, my injuries are my own, and do not need a champion.

Stu. Be not too hasty, madam. I come not in resentment, but for acquittance—You thought me poor; and to the feign'd distresses of a friend gave up your jewels.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bev. I gave 'em to a husband.

Stu. Who gave 'em to a——

Mrs. Bev. What? whom did he give 'em to?

Stu. A mistress.

Mrs. Bev. No; on my life he did not.

Stu. Himself confess'd it, with curses on her avarice.

Mrs. Bev. I'll not believe it——He has no mistress——or, if he has, why is it told to me?

Stu. To guard you against insults. He told me that, to move you to a compliance, he forg'd that letter; pretending I was ruin'd; ruin'd by him too. The fraud succeeded; and what a trusting wife bestow'd in pity, was lavish'd on a wanton.

Mrs. Bev. Then I am lost, indeed; and my afflictions are too powerful for me——His follies I have borne without upbraiding, and saw the approach of poverty without a tear——My affections, my strong affections supported me through every trial.

Stu. Be patient, madam.

Mrs. Bev. Patient! the barbarous, ungrateful man! And does he think that the tenderness of my heart is his best security for wounding it? But he shall find that injuries such as these can arm my weakness for vengeance and redress.

Stu. Ha! then I may succeed—— [Aside.] Redress is in your power.

Mrs. Bev. What redress?

Stu. Forgive me, madam, if in my zeal to serve you, I hazard your displeasure.——Think of your wretched state. Already want surrounds you: is it in patience to bear that? to see your helpless little one robb'd of his birth-right? a sister, too, with unavailing tears, lamenting her lost fortune? no comfort left you, but ineffectual pity from the few, out-weigh'd by insults from the many?

Mrs. Bev. Am I so lost a creature? Well, sir, my redress?

Stu. To be resolv'd is to secure it. The marriage vow, once violated, is in the sight of Heaven dissolv'd——Start not, but hear me! 'tis now the summer

mer of your youth ; time has not crop'd the roses from your cheek, tho' sorrow long has wash'd 'em—Then use your beauty wisely ; and, freed by injuries, fly from the cruellest of men, for shelter with the kindest.

Mrs. Bev. And who is he ?

Stu. A friend to the unfortunate ; a bold one too ; who, while the storm is bursting on your brow, and lightning flashing from your eyes, dares tell you that he loves you.

Mrs. Bev. Wou'd that these eyes had Heaven's own lightning ! that with a look, thus I might blast thee ! Am I then fallen so low ? Has poverty so humbled me, that I should listen to a hellish offer, and sell my soul for bread ? O villain ! villain !—But now I know thee, and thank thee for the knowledge.

Stu. If you are wise, you shall have cause to thank me.

Mrs. Bev. An injur'd husband, too, shall thank thee.

Stu. Yet know, proud woman, I have a heart as stubborn, as your own ; as haughty and imperious ; and as it loves, so can it hate.

Mrs. Bev. Mean despicable villain ! I scorn thee and thy threats. Was it for this that *Beverley* was false ? that his too credulous wife shou'd in despair and vengeance give up her honour to a wretch ? But he shall know it, and vengeance shall be his.

Stu. Why, send him for defiance then. Tell him I love his wife ; but that a worthless husband forbids our union. I'll make a widow of you, and court you honourably.

Mrs. Bev. O coward ! coward ! thy soul will shrink at him. Yet in the thoughts of what may happen, I feel a woman's fears. Keep thy own secret, and be gone. Who's there ?

Enter Lucy.

Your absence, sir, wou'd please me.

Stu. I'll not offend you, madam.

[Exit Stu. with Lucy.]

Mrs. Bev. Why opens not the earth to swallow such a monster ?

a monster? be conscience then his punisher, 'till Heaven in mercy gives him penitence, or dooms him in its justice.

Re-enter Lucy.

Come to my chamber, *Lucy*; I have a tale to tell thee, shall make thee weep for thy poor mistress.

*Yet Heaven the guiltless sufferer regards,
And whom it most afflicts, it most rewards.*

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T IV.

S C E N E. *Beverley's Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Beverley, Charlotte, and Lewson.

Char. **T**HE smooth-tongu'd hypocrite!

Lew. But we have found him, and will requite him—Be chearful, madam; [*To Mrs. Bev.*] and for the insults of this ruffian you shall have ample retribution.

Mrs. Bev. But not by violence—Remember you have sworn it; I had been silent else.

Lew. You need not doubt me; I shall be cool as patience.

Mrs. Bev. See him to-morrow then.

Lew. And why not now? By Heaven the veriest worm that crawls is made of braver spirit than this *Stukely*—Yet for my promise, I'll deal gently with him—I mean to watch his looks—From those, and from his answers to my charge, much may be learnt. Next I'll to *Bates*, and fust him to the bottom. If I fail there, the gang is numerous, and for a bribe will each betray the other—Good night; I'll lose no time.

[*Ex. Lewson.*]

Mrs. Bev. These boisterous spirits! how they wound me! but reasoning is in vain. Come, *Charlotte*, we'll to our usual watch. The night grows late.

Char.

Char. I am fearful of events; yet pleas'd—To-morrow may relieve us. [Going.]

Enter Jarvis.

Char. How now, good *Jarvis*?

Jar. I have heard ill news, madam.

Mrs. Bew. What news? speak quickly.

Jar. Men are not what they seem. I fear me *Mr. Stukely* is dishonest.

Char. We know it, *Jarvis*. But what's your news?

Jar. That there's an action against my master, at his friend's suit.

Mrs. Bew. O villain! villain! 'twas this he threaten'd then. Run to that den of robbers, *Wilson's*—Your master may be there. Entreat him home, good *Jarvis*. Say I have business with him—But tell him not of *Stukely*—It may provoke him to revenge—Haste! haste! good *Jarvis*. [Exit Jarvis.]

Char. This minister of hell! O I could tear him piece-meal!

Mrs. Bew. I am sick of such a world—Yet Heaven is just; and, in its own good time, will hurl destruction on such monsters. [Exit.]

SCENE changes to *Stukely's Lodgings.*

Enter Stukely and Bates meeting.

Bates. Where have you been?

Stu. Fooling my time away—Playing my tricks, like a tame monkey, to entertain a woman—No matter where—I have been vext and disappointed. Tell me of *Beverley*—How bore he his last shock?

Bat. Like one (so *Darwin* says) whose senses had been numb'd with misery. When all was lost he fixt his eyes upon the ground, and stood some time, with folded arms, stupid and motionless. Then snatching his sword that hung against the wainscot, he sat him down; and with a look of fixt attention, drew figures on the floor—At last he started up, look'd wild, and trembled; and, like a woman seiz'd with her sex's fits, laugh'd out aloud, while the tears trickled down his face—to left the room.

Stu. Why, this was madness.

Bat.

Bat. The madness of despair.

Stu. We must confine him then. A prison wou'd do well. [*A knocking at the door.*] Hark! that knocking may be his. Go that way down; [*Exit Bates.* Who's there?

Enter Lewson.

Lew. An enemy—an open and avow'd one.

Stu. Why am I thus broke in upon? This house is mine, sir; and shou'd protect me from insult and ill-manners.

Lew. Guilt has no place of sanctuary; wherever found 'tis virtue's lawful game. The fox's hold and tyger's den are no security against the hunter.

Stu. Your business, sir?

Lew. To tell you that I know you—why this confusion? That look of guilt and terror?—Is *Beverley* awake? Or has his wife told tales? The man that dares like you, shou'd have a soul to justify his deeds, and courage to confront accusers. Not with a coward's fear to shrink beneath reproof.

Stu. Who waits there?

(*Aloud, and in confusion.*

Lew. By Heaven he dies that interrupts us. (*Shutting the door.*) You shou'd have weigh'd your strength, sir; and then, instead of climbing to high fortune, the world had mark'd you for what you are, a little poultry villain.

Stu. You think I fear you.

Lew. I know you fear me. This is to prove it, (*pulls him by the sleeve.*) You wanted privacy! A lady's presence took up your attention! Now we are alone, sir. Why, what a wretch! (*flings him from him.*) The vilest insect in creation will turn when trampled on; yet has this thing undone a man, by cunning and mean arts undone him. But we have found you, sir; trac'd you thro' all your labyrinths. If you wou'd save yourself fall to confession. No mercy will be shewn else.

Stu. First prove me what you think me——'Till then

then your threatnings are in vain—and for this insult, vengeance may yet be mine.

Lew. Infamous coward! why, take it now then—*(draws, and Stukely retires.)* Alas! I pity thee—Yet that a wretch like this shou'd overcome a *Beverley*! it fills me with astonishment!—A wretch, so mean of soul, that even desperation cannot animate him to look upon an enemy—You shou'd not thus have soar'd fir, unless, like others of your black profession, you had a sword to keep the fools in awe your villainy has ruined.

Stu. Villainy! 'Twere best to curb this licence of your tongue; for know, fir, while there are laws, this outrage on my reputation will not be borne with.

Lew. Laws! dar'st thou seek shelter from the laws? Those laws, which thou and thy infernal crew live in the constant violation of? Talk'st thou of reputation, too? when, under friendship's sacred name, thou hast betray'd, robb'd, and destroy'd?

Stu. Ay, rail at gaming; 'tis a rich topic, and affords noble declamation—Go, preach against it in the city: You'll find a congregation in every tavern. If they should laugh at you, fly to my lord, and sermonize it there: he'll thank you, and reform.

Lew. And will example sanctify a vice? No, wretch; the custom of my lord, or of the cit that apes him, cannot excuse a breach of law, or make the Gamester's calling reputable.

Stu. Rail on, I say—But is this zeal for beggar'd *Beverley*? Is it for him that I am treated thus? No; he and his wife might both have groan'd in prison, had but the sister's fortune escap'd the wreck, to have rewarded the disinterested love of honest Mr. *Lewison*.

Lew. How I detest thee for the thought! but thou art lost to every human feeling. Yet let me tell thee, and may it wring thy heart! that tho' my friend is ruin'd by thy snares; thou hast unknowingly been kind to me.

Stu. Have I? It was indeed unknowingly.

Lew.

Lew. Thou hast assisted me in love; given me the merit that I wanted; since, but for thee, my *Charlotte* had not known 'twas her dear self I sigh'd for, and not her fortune.

Stu. Thank me, and take her then.

Lew. And as a brother to poor *Beverley*, I will pursue the robber that has stript him, and snatch him from his gripe.

Stu. Then know, imprudent man, he is within my gripe; and shou'd my friendship for him be slander'd once again, the hand that has supply'd him, shall fall and crush him.

Lew. Why, now there's a spirit in thee! this is indeed to be a villain! but I shall reach thee yet—Fly where thou wilt, my vengeance shall pursue thee—And *Beverley* shall yet be sav'd, be sav'd from thee, thou monster; nor owe his rescue to his wife's dishonour.

[Exit.

Stu. (pausing) Then ruin has enclos'd me. Curse on my coward heart! I wou'd be bravely villainous; but 'tis my nature to shrink at danger, and he has found me. Yet fear brings caution, and that security—more mischief must be done to hide the past—look to yourself, officious *Lewson*—there may be danger stirring—How now, *Bates*?

Enter *Bates*.

Bat. What is the matter? 'Twas *Lewson* and not *Beverley* that left you—I heard him loud—You seem alarm'd too.

Stu. Ay, and with reason—we are discover'd.

Bat. I fear'd as much, and therefore caution'd you—but you were peremptory.

Stu. Thus fools talk ever; spending their idle breath on what is past, and trembling at the future. We must be active. *Beverley*, at worst, is but suspicious; but *Lewson's* genius, and his hate to me, will lay all open. Means must be found to stop him.

Bat. What means?

Stu. Dispatch him—nay, start not—desperate occasions

occasions call for desperate deeds.—we live but by his death.

Bat. You cannot mean it?

Stu. I do, by Heaven.

Bat. Good night then.

[*Going.*

Stu. Stay. I must be heard, then answer'd. Perhaps the motion was too sudden; and human weakness starts at murder, tho' strong necessity compels it. I have thought long of this; and my first feelings were like your's; a foolish conscience aw'd me, which soon I conquer'd. The man that wou'd undo me, Nature cries out, undo. Brutes know their foes by instinct; and where superior force is given, they use it for destruction. Shall man do less? *Lewson* pursues us to our ruin; and shall we, with the means to crush him, fly from our hunter, or turn and tear him? 'Tis folly even to hesitate.

Bat. He has oblig'd me, and I dare not.

Stu. Why, live to shame then, to beggary and punishment. You wou'd be privy to the deed, yet want the soul to act it. Nay more; had my designs been levell'd at his fortune, you had stept in the foremost—And what is life without its comforts? Those you wou'd rob him of; and, by the lingering death, add cruelty to murder. Henceforth adieu to half-made villains—there's danger in 'em. What you have got is your's; keep it, and hide with it—I'll deal my future bounty to those that merit it?

Bat. What's the reward?

Stu. Equal division of our gains. I swear it, and will be just.

Bat. Think of the means then.

Stu. He's gone to *Beverley's*—wait for him in the street—'Tis a dark night, and fit for mischief. A dagger would be useful.

Bat. He sleeps no more.

Stu. Consider the reward! when the deed's done, I have farther business with you. Send *Darwfen* to me.

Bat.

THE GAMESTER.

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Bat. Think it already done——and so farewell.

[*Exit.*

Stu. Why, farewell *Lewson* then; and farewell to my fears—this night secures me. I'll wait the event within

[*Exit.*

SCENE, *changes to the Street. Stage darken'd.*

Enter Beverley.

Bew. How like an out-cast do I wander? loaded with every curse, that drives the soul to desperation——The midnight robber, as he walks his rounds, sees by the glimmering lamp my frantic looks, and dreads to meet me.—Whither am I going? My home lies there; all that is dear 'on earth it holds too; yet are the gates of death more welcome to me——I'll enter it no more——Who passes there? 'Tis *Lewson*—He meets me in a gloomy hour; and memory tells me he has been meddling with my fame.

Enter Lewson.

Lew. *Beverley!* Well met. I have been busy in your affairs.

Bew. So I have heard, sir; and now must thank you as I ought.

Lew. To-morrow I may deserve your thanks. Late as it is, I go to *Bates*. Discoveries are making that an arch villain trembles at.

Bew. Discoveries are made, sir, that you shall tremble at. Where is this boasted spirit? this high demeanour, that was to call me to account? You say I have wrong'd my sister——Now say as much. But first be ready for defence, as I am for resentment. [*Draws.*

Lew. What mean you? I understand you not.

Bew. The coward's stale acquittance. Who, when he spreads foul calumny abroad, and dreads just vengeance on him, cries out, What mean you? I understand you not!

Lew. Coward and calumny! Whence are those words? But I forgive and pity you.

C

Bew.

Bew. Your pity had been kinder to my fame. But you have traduc'd it; told a vile story to the public ear, that I have wrong'd my sister.

Lew. 'Tis false. Shew me the man that dares accuse me.

Bew. I thought you brave, and of a soul superior to low malice; but I have found you, and will have vengeance. This is no place for argument.

Lew. Nor shall it be for violence. Imprudent man! who in revenge for fancy'd injuries, wou'd pierce the heart that loves him. But honest friendship acts from itself, unmov'd by slander, or ingratitude. 'The life you thirst for, shall be employ'd to serve you.

Bew. 'Tis thus you wou'd compound then—First do a wrong beyond forgiveness, and to redress it, load me with kindnesses unsolicited. I'll not receive it. Your zeal is troublesome.

Lew. No matter. It shall be useful.

Bew. It will not be accepted.

Lew. It must. You know me not.

Bew. Yes; for the slanderer of my fame. Who under shew of friendship, arraigns me of injustice. Buzzing in every ear foul breach of trust, and family dishonour.

Lew. Have I done this? Who told you so?

Bew. The world—'Tis talk'd of every where. It pleas'd you to add threats, too. You were to call me to account——Why, do it now then: I shall be proud of such an arbiter.

Lew. Put up your sword, and know me better. I never injur'd you. The base suggestion comes from *Stukeley*; I see him and his aims.

Bew. What aims; I'll conceal it; 'twas *Stukeley* that accus'd you.

Lew. To rid him of an enemy——Perhaps of two——He fears discovery, and frames a tale of falsehood, to ground revenge and murder on.

Bew. I must have proof of this.

Lew. Wait till to-morrow then.

Bew. I will.

Lew.

Lew. Good night—I go to serve you—Forget what's past as I do; and cheer your family with smiles. To-morrow may confirm 'em, and make all happy.

[*Exit.*

Bew. [*Pausing.*] How vile, and how absurd is man! His boasted honour is but another name for pride: which easier bears the consciousness of guilt, than the world's just reproofs. But 'tis the fashion of the times; and in defence of falsehood and false honour, men die martyrs. I knew not that my nature was so bad.

[*Stands musing.*

Enter Bates and Jarvis.

Jar. This way the noise was—and yonder's my poor master.

Bat. I heard him at high words with *Lewson*. The cause I know not.

Jar. I heard him too. Misfortunes vex him.

Bat. Go to him, and lead him home—But he comes this way—I'll not be seen by him.

[*Exit Bates.*

Bew. [*Starting.*] What fellow's that? [*Seeing Jar.*] Art thou a murderer, friend? Come, lead the way; I have a hand as mischievous as thine; a heart as desperate too—*Jarvis!*—To bed, old man, the cold will chill thee.

Jar. Why are you wandering at this late hour?—Your sword drawn too!—For Heav'n's sake sheath it, sir—the sight distracts me.

Bew. Whose voice was that?

[*Wildly.*

Jar. 'Twas mine, sir. Let me intreat you to give the sword to me.

Bew. Ah, take it—quickly take it—Perhaps I am not so curs'd, but Heav'n may have sent thee at this moment to snatch me from perdition.

Jar. Then I am blest'd.

Bew. Continue so, and leave me, my sorrows are contagious. No one is blest that's near me.

Jar. I came to seek you, sir.

Bew. And now thou hast found me, leave me—My thoughts are wild and will not be disturb'd.

Jar. Such thoughts are best disturb'd.

Bev. I tell thee that they will not——Who sent thee hither?

Jar. My weeping mistress.

Bev. Am I so meek a husband then? that a commanding wife prescribes my hours, and sends to chide me for my absence?——Tell her, I'll not return.

Jar. Those words wou'd kill her.

Bev. Kill her! Wou'd they not be kind then? But she shall live to curse me—I have deserv'd it of her. Does she not hate me, *Jarvis*?

Jar. Alas, sir! forget your griefs, and let me lead you to her. The streets are dangerous.

Bev. Be wise, and leave me then. The night's black horrors are suited to my thoughts—These stones shall be my resting-place. [*Lies down*] Here shall my soul brood o'er its miseries; 'till with the fiends of hell, and guilty of the earth, I start and tremble at the morning's light.

Jar. For pity's sake, sir!—Upon my knees I beg you to quit this place, and these sad thoughts. Let patience, not despair possess you——Rise, I beseech you—There's not a moment of your absence, that my poor mistress does not groan for.

Bev. Have I undone her, and is she still so kind? [*Starting up.*] It is too much——My brain can't hold it—O *Jarvis*! how desperate is that wretch's state, which only death or madness can relieve!

Jar. Appease his mind, good Heaven! and give him resignation! Alas, sir, cou'd beings in the other world perceive the events of this, how wou'd your parents blessed spirits grieve for you, even in Heaven—Let me conjure you by their honour'd memories, by the sweet innocence of your yet helpless child, and by the ceaseless sorrows of my poor mistress, to rouse your manhood, and struggle with these griefs.

Bev. Thou virtuous, good old man! thy tears and thy intreaties have reach'd my heart, thro' all its miseries. 'O! had I listen'd to thy honest warnings, no earthly blessing had been wanting to me!—I was so
' happy

'happy, that even a wish for more than I possess'd,
'was arrogant presumption. But I have warr'd
'against the power that bless'd me, and now am sen-
'tenc'd to the hell I merit.'

Jar. Be but resign'd, sir, and happiness may yet be yours.

'*Bew.* Prythee be honest, and do not flatter
'misery.

'*Jar.* I do not, sir.'—Hark! I hear voices—
Come this way; we may reach home unnotic'd.

Bew. 'Well, lead me then'—Un-notic'd did'st thou
say? Alas! I dread no looks but of those wretches I
have made at home. [Exit.

SCENE *changes to* Stukeley's.

Enter Stukeley and Dawson.

Stu. Come hither, *Dawson*. My limbs are on the
rack, and my soul shivers in me, 'till this night's bu-
siness be complete. Tell me my thoughts: Is *Bates*
determin'd, or does he waver?

Daw. At first he seem'd irresolute; wish'd the em-
ployment had been mine; and mutter'd curses on his
coward hand, that trembled at the deed.

Stu. And did he leave you so?

Daw. No. We walk'd together; and shelter'd by
the darkness, saw *Beverley* and *Lewson* in warm de-
bate. But soon they cool'd; and then I left 'em to
hasten hither; but not 'till 'twas resolv'd *Lewson*
shou'd die.

Stu. Thy words have given me life—That quarrel
too, was fortunate; for if my hopes deceive me not, it
promises a grave to *Beverley*.

Daw. You misconceive me. *Lewson* and he were
friends:

Stu. But my prolific brain shall make 'em enemies.
If *Lewson* falls, he falls by *Beverley*. An upright
jury shall decree it. Ask me no question, but do as
I direct. This writ [*Takes out a pocket-book*] for some
days past, I have treasur'd here, 'till a convenient

time call'd for its use. That time is come. Take it, and give it to an officer. It must be serv'd this instant.

[Gives a paper.]

Daw. On *Beverley*?

Stu. Look at it. 'Tis for the fums that I have lent him.

Daw. Must he to prison then?

Stu. I ask'd obedience; not replies. This night a jail must be his lodging. 'Tis probable he's not gone home yet. Wait at his door, and see it executed.

Daw. Upon a beggar? He has no means of payment.

Stu. Dull and insensible! If *Lewson* dies, who was it kill'd him? Why, he that was seen quarrelling with him; and I that knew of *Beverley*'s intents, arrested him in friendship——A little late, perhaps; but 'twas a virtuous act, and men will thank me for it. Now, sir, you understand me?

Daw. Most perfectly——And will about it.

Stu. Haste then; and when 'tis done, come back and tell me.

Daw. 'Till then farewell.

[Exit.]

Stu. Now tell thy tale, fond wife! And *Lewson*, if again thou can'st insult me, 'I'll kneel and own thee for my master.'

*Not avarice now, but vengeance fires my breast,
And one short hour must make me curst or blest.*

[Exit.]

ACT V. *Scène continues.*

Enter Stukeley, Bates, and Dawson.

Bates. **P**OOOR *Lewson*!——But I told you enough last night——The thought of him is horrible to me.

Stu. In the street, did you say? And no one near him?

Bat.

Bat. By his own door; he was leading me to his house. I pretended business with him, and stabb'd him to the heart, while he was reaching at the bell.

Stu. And did he fall so suddenly?

Bat. The repetition pleases you, I see. I told you, he fell without a groan.

Stu. What heard you of him this morning?

Bat. That the watch found him in their rounds, and alarm'd the servants. I mingled with the croud just now, and saw him dead in his own house.—The sight terrify'd me.

Stu. Away with terrors, 'till his ghost rise and accuse us—We have no living enemy to fear—unless 'tis *Beverley*; and him we have lodg'd safe in prison.

Bat. Must he be murder'd too?

Stu. No; I have a scheme to make the law his murderer—At what hour did *Lewson* fall?

Bat. The clock struck twelve as I turn'd to leave him. 'Twas a melancholy bell, I thought tolling for his death.

Stu. The time was lucky for us—*Beverley* was arrested at one, you say?

[To Dawson.]

Daw. Exactly.

Stu. Good. We'll talk of this presently—The women were with him, I think?

Daw. And old *Jarvis*. I wou'd have told you of 'em last night, but your thoughts were too busy. 'Tis well you have a heart of stone, the tale wou'd melt it else.

Stu. Out with it then.

Daw. I trac'd him to his lodgings; and pretending pity for his misfortunes, kept the door open, while the officers seiz'd him. 'Twas a damn'd deed—but no matter—I follow'd my instructions.

Stu. And what said he?

Daw. He upbraided me with treachery; call'd you a villain; acknowledged the sums you had lent him, and submitted to his fortune.

Stu. And the women—

Daw. For a few minutes astonishment kept 'em

silent——They look'd wildly at one another, while the tears stream'd down their cheeks. But rage and fury soon gave 'em words; and then, in the very bitterness of despair, they curs'd me and the monster that had employ'd me.

Stu. And you bore it with philosophy?

Daw. 'Till the scene chang'd, and then I melted. I order'd the officers to take away their prisoner. The women shriek'd, and won'd have followed him; but we forbade 'em. 'Twas then they fell upon their knees, the wife fainting, the sister raving, and both with all the eloquence of misery endeavouring to soften us. I never felt compassion 'till that moment; and had the officers been mov'd like me, we had left the business undone, and fled with curses on ourselves. But their hearts were steel'd by custom. The tears of beauty and the pangs of affection were beneath their pity. They tore him from their arms and lodg'd him in prison, with only *Jarvis* to comfort him.

Stu. There let him lie, 'till we have farther business with him.——And for you, sir, let me hear no more of your compassion——A fellow nurs'd, in villainy, and employ'd from childhood in the business of hell, shou'd have no dealings with compassion.

Daw. Say you so, sir?—You shou'd have nam'd the devil that tempted me——

Stu. 'Tis false. I found you a villain, and therefore employ'd you——but no more of this——we have embark'd too far in mischief to recede. *Lewson* is dead, and we are all principals in his murder. Think of that—There's time enough for pity when ourselves are out of danger——*Beverley* still lives, tho' in a jail——His ruin will set heavy on him; and discoveries may be made to undoe us all. Something must be done, and speedily——You saw him quarrelling with *Lewson* in the street last night.

[To *Bates*.

Bat. I did; his steward, *Jarvis*, saw him too.

Stu. And shall attest it. Here's matter to work upon——An unwilling evidence carries weight with him.

him. Something of my design I have hinted t'you before—*Beverley* must be the author of this murder; and we the parties to convict him.'—But how to proceed will require time and thought—Come along with me; the room within is fitted for privacy—But no compassion, sir—[*To Dawson*] We want leisure for't—This way. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE *changes to Beverley's lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Beverley and Charlotte.

Mrs. Bev. No news of *Dawson* yet?

Char. None. He went out early, and knows not what has happen'd. [*Clock strikes eight.*]

Mrs. Bev. The clock strikes eight—I'll wait no longer.

Char. Stay but 'till *Jarvis* comes. He has sent twice to stop us 'till we see him.

Mrs. Bev. I have no life in this separation—O! what a night was last night! I wou'd not pass another such to purchase worlds by it—My poor *Beverley* too! What must he have felt! the very thought distracts me—To have him torn at midnight from me!—A loathsome prison his habitation! a cold damp room his lodging! the bleak winds perhaps blowing upon his pillow! no fond wife to lull him to his rest! and no reflections but to wound and tear him!—'Tis too horrible—I wanted love for him, or they had not forc'd him from me. They shou'd have parted soul and body first—I was too tame.

Char. You must not talk so. All that we cou'd we did; and *Jarvis* did the rest—The faithful creature will give him comfort. Why does he delay coming!

Mrs. Bev. And there's another fear. His poor master may be claiming the last kind office from him—His heart perhaps is breaking.

Char. See where he comes—His looks are cheerful too.

Enter Jarvis.

Mrs. Bev. Are tears then cheerful? alas, he weeps!

C 5

Speak

Speak to him, *Charlotte*—I have no tongue to ask him questions.

Char. How does your master, *Jarvis*?

Jar. I am old and foolish, madam; and tears will come before my words—But don't you weep; [*To Mrs. Bev.*] I have a tale of joy for you.

Mrs. Bev. What tale?—Say but he's well, and I have joy enough.

Jar. His mind too shall be well—all shall be well—I have news for him that shall make his poor heart bound again—Fie upon old age—How childish it makes me! I have a tale of joy for you, and my tears drown it.

Char. Shed 'em in showers then, and make haste to tell it.

Mrs. Bev. What is it, *Jarvis*?

Jar. Yet why shou'd I rejoice when a good man dies? Your uncle, madam, dy'd yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. My uncle!—O Heavens!

Char. How heard you of his death?

Jar. His steward came express, madam—I met him in the street, enquiring for your lodgings—I should not rejoice perhaps—but he was old, and my poor master a prisoner—Now he shall live again—O 'tis a brave fortune! and 'twas death to me to see him a prisoner.

Char. Where left you the steward?

Jar. I wou'd not bring him hither, to be a witness of your distresses; and besides, I wanted once before I die, to be the messenger of joy t'you. My good master will be a man again.

Mrs. Bev. Haste, haste then; and let us fly to him!—We are delaying our own happiness.

Jar. I had forgot a coach, madam, and *Lucy* has order'd one.

Mrs. Bev. Where was the need of that? the news has given me wings.

Char. I have no joy, 'till my poor brother shares it with me. How did he pass the night, *Jarvis*?

Jar. Why now, madam, I can tell you. Like a
man

man dreaming of death and horrors. When they led him to his cell—for 'twas a poor apartment for my master—he flung himself upon a wretched bed, and lay speechless 'till day-break. A sigh now and then, and a few tears that follow'd those sighs, were all that told me he was alive. I spoke to him, but he wou'd not hear me; and when I persisted, he rais'd his hand at me, and knit his brow so—I thought he wou'd have struck me.

Mrs. Bev. O miserable! But what said he, *Jarvis*? or was he silent all night?

Jar. At day-break he started from the bed, and looking wildly at me, ask'd who I was. I told him, and bid him be of comfort—Begone, old wretch, says he—I have sworn never to know comfort—My wife! my child! my sister! I have undone 'em all, and will know no comfort—Then falling upon his knees, he imprecated curses upon himself.

Mrs. Bev. This is too horrible!—But you did not leave him so?

Char. No, I am sure he did not.

Jar. I had not the heart, madam. By degrees I brought him to himself. A shower of tears came to his relief; and then he call'd me the kindest friend, and begg'd forgiveness of me like a child—I was a child too, when he begg'd forgiveness of me. My heart throbb'd so, I cou'd not speak to him. He turned from me for a minute or two, and suppressing a few bitter sighs, enquir'd after his wretched family—Wretched was his word, madam—Ask'd how you bore the misery of last night—If you had goodness enough to see him in prison. And then begg'd me to hasten to you. I told him he must be more himself first—He promised me he wou'd; and bating a few sudden intervals, he became compos'd and easy—And then I left him; but not without an attendant—a servant in the prison, whom I hir'd to wait upon him—'Tis an hour since we parted—I was prevented in my haste to be the messenger of joy to you.

Mrs. Bev. What a tale is this?—But we have staid too long—A coach is needless.

Char. Hark! I hear one at the door.

Jar. 'And Lucy comes to tell us.'—We'll away this moment.

Mrs. Bev. To comfort him or die with him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to Stukeley's Lodgings.

Enter Stukeley, Bates and Dawson.

Stu. Here's presumptive evidence at least—or if we want more, why we must swear more. But all unwillingly—We gain credit by reluctance—I have told you how to proceed. *Beverley* must die—We hunt him in view now, and must not slacken in the chace. 'Tis either death for him, or shame and punishment for us. Think of that, and remember your instructions—You, *Bates*, must to the prison immediately. I wou'd be there but a few minutes before you. And you, *Dawson*, must follow in a few minutes after. So here we divide—But answer me: you are resolved upon this business like men?

Bates. Like villains rather—But you may depend upon us.

Stu. Like what we are then—You make no answer, *Dawson*—Compassion, I suppose, has seiz'd you.

Daw. No; I have disclaim'd it—My answer is *Bates's*—You may depend upon me.

Stu. Consider the reward! riches and security! I have sworn to divide with you to the last shilling—So here we separate 'till we meet in prison—Remember your instructions and be men. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to a Prison.

Beverley is discover'd sitting. After a short pause, he starts up, and comes forward.

Bev. Why, there's an end then. I have judg'd deliberately, and the result is death. How the self-murderer's

derer's account may stand, I know not. But this I know——The load of hateful life oppresses me too much——The horrors of my soul are more than I can bear——[*offers to kneel*] Father of mercy!——I cannot pray——Despair has laid his iron hand upon me, and seal'd me for perdition——Conscience! conscience! thy clamours are too loud——Here's that shall silence thee. [*Takes a vial out of his pocket, and looks at it.*] Thou art most friendly to the miserable. Come then, thou cordial for sick minds——Come to my heart. [*Drinks*] O, that the grave would bury memory as well as body! for if the soul sees and feels the sufferings of those dear ones it leaves behind, the everlasting has no vengeance to torment it deeper——I'll think no more on't——Reflection comes too late——Once there was a time for't——but now 'tis past.——Who's there?

Enter Jarvis.

Jar. One that hop'd to see you with better looks——Why d'you turn so from me? I have brought comfort with me. And see who comes to give it welcome.

Bev. My wife and sister! why, 'tis but one pang more then, and farewell world. [*Aside.*

Enter Mrs. Beverley and Charlotte.

Mrs. Bev. Where is he? [*Runs and embraces him*] O I have him! I have him! and now they shall never part us more—I have news, love, to make you happy for ever——' But don't look coldly on me.

' *Char.* How is it, brother?

' *Mrs. Bev.* Alas! he hears us not——Speak to me, love. I have no heart to see you thus.

Bev. ' Nor I to bear the sense of so much shame'——This is a sad place.

Mrs. Bev. We came to take you from it. To tell you the world goes well again. That Providence has seen our sorrows, and sent the means to help 'em——Your uncle dy'd yesterday.

Bev. My uncle!—No, do not say so!—O! I am sick at heart!

Mrs.

Mrs. Bev. Indeed!——I meant to bring you comfort.

Bev. Tell me he lives then——If you would bring me comfort, tell me he lives.

Mrs. Bev. And if I did——I have no power to raise the dead——He died yesterday.

Bev. And I am heir to him?

Jar. To his whole estate, sir——But bear it patiently——pray bear it patiently.

Bev. Well, well——[Pausing] Why fame says I am rich then?

Mrs. Bev. And truly so——Why do you look so wildly?

Bev. Do I? The news was unexpected. But has he left me all?

Jar. All, all, sir——He could not leave it from you.

Bev. I am sorry for it.

Char. Sorry! why sorry?

Bev. Your uncle's dead, Charlotte.

Char. Peace be with his soul then——Is it so terrible that an old man should die?

Bev. He shou'd have been immortal.

Mrs. Bev. 'Heaven knows I wish'd not for his death. 'Twas the will of Providence that he shou'd die'——Why are you disturb'd so?

Bev. Has death no terrors in it?

Mrs. Bev. Not an old man's death. Yet if it troubles you, I wish him living.

Bev. And I, with all my heart.

Char. Why, what's the matter?

Bev. Nothing——How heard you of his death?

Mrs. Bev. His steward came express. Wou'd I had never known it!

Bev. Or had heard it one day sooner.——For I have a tale to tell, shall turn you into stone; or if the power of speech remain, you shall kneel down and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! what tale is this? And why are we to curse you——I'll bless you for ever.

Bev.

Bev. No; I have deserv'd no blessings. The world holds not such another wretch. All this large fortune, this second bounty of Heaven, that might have heal'd our sorrows, and satisfy'd our utmost hopes, in a curs'd hour I sold last night.

Char. Sold! how sold!

Mrs. Bev. Impossible!—It cannot be!

Bev. That devil *Stukeley*, with all hell to aid him, tempted me to the deed. To pay false debts of honour, and to redeem past errors, I sold the reversion—Sold it for a scanty sum, and lost it among villains.

Char. Why, farewell all then

Bev. Liberty and life——Come kneel and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Then hear me, Heaven! [*Kneels*] Look down with mercy on his sorrows! give softness to his looks, and quiet to his heart! take from his memory the sense of what is past, and cure him of despair! On me! on me! if misery must be the lot of either, multiply misfortunes! I'll bear 'em patiently, so he is happy! these hands shall toil for his support! these eyes be lifted up for hourly blessings on him! and every duty of a fond and faithful wife be doubly done to cheer and comfort him!——So hear me! so reward me!

[*Rises.*]

Bev. I would kneel too, but that offended Heaven wou'd turn my prayers into curses. 'What have I to ask for! is it for length of days that I should kneel? no; my time is limited. Or is it for this world's blessings upon you and yours? to pour out my heart in wishes for a ruin'd wife, a child and sister? O! no!' for I have done a deed to make life horrible t' you——

Mrs. Bev. Why horrible? is poverty so horrible?
—The real wants of life are few. A little industry will supply 'em all—And cheerfulness will follow—It is the privilege of honest industry, and we'll enjoy it fully.

Bev. Never, never—O, I have told you but in part. The irrevocable deed is done.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bev. What deed?—And why do you look so at me?

Bev. A deed that dooms my soul to vengeance—That seals your misery here, and mine hereafter.

Mrs. Bev. No, no; you have a heart too good for't—Alas! he raves, *Charlotte*—His looks too terrify me—Speak comfort to him—He can have done no deed of wickedness.

Char. And yet I fear the worst—What is it, brother?

Bev. A deed of horror.

Jar. Ask him no questions, madam—This last misfortune has hurt his brain. A little time will give him patience.

Enter Stukeley.

Bev. Why is this villain here?

Stu. To give you liberty and safety. There, madam's, his discharge. [*Giving a paper to Mrs. Beverley*] Let him fly this moment. The arrest last night was meant in friendship; but came too late.

Char. What mean you, sir?

Stu. The arrest was too late, I say; I wou'd have kept his hands from blood, but was too late.

Mrs. Bev. His hands from blood!—Whose blood?—O, wretch! wretch!

Stu. From *Lewson's* blood.

Char. No, villain! yet what of *Lewson*? speak quickly.

Stu. You are ignorant then! I thought I heard the murderer at confession.

Char. What murderer?—And who is murder'd? not *Lewson*?—say he lives, and I'll kneel and worship you.

Stu. In pity, so I wou'd; but that the tongues of all cry murder. I came in pity, not in malice; to save the brother, not kill the sister. Your *Lewson's* dead.

Char. O horrible!—Why who has kill'd him? and yet it cannot be. What crime had he committed that he should die? villain! He lives! he lives! and shall revenge these pangs.

Mrs.

THE GAMESTER.

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Mrs. Bev. Patience, sweet Charlotte.

Char. O, 'tis too much for patience!

Mrs. Bev. He comes in pity, he says! O! execrable villain! the friend is kill'd then, and this the murderer?

Bev. Silence, I charge you——Proceed, fir.

Stu. No. Justice may stop the tale—and here's an evidence.

Enter Bates.

Bates. The news, I see, has reach'd you. But take comfort, madam. [*To Char.*] There's one without enquiring for you—Go to him, and lose no time.

Char. O misery! misery!

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Bev. Follow her, Jarvis. If it be true that Lewson's dead, her grief may kill her.

Bates. Jarvis must stay here, madam. I have some questions for him.

Stu. Rather let him fly. His evidence may crush his matter.

Bev. Why ay; this looks like management.

Bates. He found you quarrelling with Lewson in the street last night.

[*To Bev.*]

Mrs. Bev. No; I am sure he did not.

Jar. Or if I did——

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis false, old man——They had no quarrel; there was no cause for quarrel.

Bev. Let him proceed I say—O! I am sick! sick! —Reach a chair.

[*He sits down.*]

Mrs. Bev. You droop, and tremble, love.—Your eyes are fixt too—Yet you are innocent. If Lewson's dead, you kill'd him not.

Enter Dawson.

Stu. Who sent for Dawson?

Bates. 'Twas I——We have a witness too, you little think of——Without there!

Stu. What witness?

Bates. A right one. Look at him.

Enter Lewson and Charlotte.

Stu. Lewson! O villains! villains!

[*To Bates and Dawson.*]

Mrs.

Mrs. Bev. Risen from the dead! why, this is unexpected happiness!

Char. Or is't his ghost? [*To Stukeley*] that sight wou'd please you, sir.

Jar. What riddle's this?

Bew. Be quick and tell it—My minutes are but few.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! why so? you shall live long and happily.

Lew. While shame and punishment shall rack that viper [*Pointing to Stukeley*] the tale is short—I was too busy in his secrets, and therefore doom'd to die. *Bates*, to prevent the murder, undertook it—I kept aloof to give it credit.—

Char. And give me pangs unutterable.

Lew. I felt 'em all, and would have told you—But vengeance wanted ripening. The villain's scheme was but half executed. The arrest by *Dawson* follow'd the suppos'd murder—And now, depending on his once wicked associates, he comes to fix the guilt on *Beverley*.

Mrs. Bev. O! execrable wretch!

Bates. *Dawson* and I are witnesses of this.

Lew. And of a thousand frauds. His fortune ruin'd by sharpers and false dice; and *Stukeley* sole contriver and possessor of all.

Daw. Had he but stopt on this side murder, we had been villains still.

Mrs. Bev. Thus Heaven turns evil into good; and by permitting sin, warns men to virtue.

Lew. Yet punishes the instrument. So shall our laws; tho' not with death. But death were mercy. Shame, beggary, and imprisonment, unpity'd misery, the stings of conscience, and the curses of mankind, shall make life hateful to him——till at last, his own hand end him.——How does my friend? [*To Bev.*

Bew. Why, well. Who's he that asks me?

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis *Lewson*, love—Why do you look so at him?

Bew. They told me he was murder'd. [*Wildly.*

Mrs. Bev. Ay; but he lives to save us.

Bew.

Bev. Lend me your hand—The room turns round.

Mrs. Bev. O Heaven!

Lew. This villain here disturbs him. Remove him from his sight—And for your lives see that you guard him: [*Stukeley is taken off by Dawson and Bates.*] How is it, sir?

Bev. 'Tis here—and here [*Pointing to his head and heart.*] And now it tears me!

Mrs. Bev. You feel convuls'd too—What is't disturbs you?

Lew. This sudden turn of joy perhaps—He wants rest to—Last night was dreadful to him. His brain is giddy.

Char. Ay, never to be cur'd—Why, brother!—O! I fear! I fear!

Mrs. Bev. Preserve him, Heaven!—My love! my life! look at me!—How his eyes flame!

Bev. A furnace rages in this heart—'I have been too hasty.

Mrs. Bev. Indeed!—O me! O me!—Help, *Jarvis!* fly, fly for help! your master dies else.—Weep not, but fly! [*Ex. Jar.*] What is this hasty deed?—Yet do not answer me—My fears have guess'd.

Bev. Call back the messenger—'Tis not in medicine's power to help me.

Mrs. Bev. Is it then so?

Bev. Down, restless flames!—[*Laying his hand on his heart*] down to your native Hell—There you shall rack me—O! for a pause from pain!

Mrs. Bev. Help, *Charlotte!* support him, sir! [*To Lewson.*] This is a killing sight!

Bev. That pang was well—It has numb'd my senses,—Where's my wife?—Can you forgive me, love?

Mrs. Bev. Alas! for what?

Bev. [*Starting again.*] And there's another pang—Now all is quiet—Will you forgive me?

Mrs. Bev. I will—Tell me for what?

Bev. For meanly dying.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bev. No——do not say it.

Bev. As truly as my soul must answer it——Had Jarvis staid this morning, all had been well. But press'd by shame——pent in a prison——tormented with my pangs for you——driven to despair and madness——I took the advantage of his absence, corrupted the poor wretch he left to guard me, and——swallow'd poison.

Mrs. Bev. O! fatal deed!

Char. Dreadful and cruel!

Bev. Ay, most accurs'd——And now I go to my account. This rest from pain brings death; yet 'tis Heaven's kindness to me. I wish'd for ease; a moment's ease, that cool repentance and contrition might soften vengeance?——Bend me, and let me kneel. [*They lift him from his chair, and support him on his knees.*] I'll pray for you too. Thou Power that madest me, hear me! if for a life of frailty, and this too hasty deed of death, thy justice dooms me, here I acquit the sentence. But if, enthron'd in mercy where thou sit'st, thy pity has beheld me, send me a gleam of hope; that in these last and bitter moments my soul may taste of comfort! and for these mourners here, O! let their lives be peaceful, and their deaths happy!——And now I die.

Mrs. Bev. Restore him, Heaven! stretch forth thy arm omnipotent, and snatch him from the grave!——O save him! save him! or let me die too.

Bev. Alas! that prayer is fruitless. Already death has seiz'd me——Yet Heaven is gracious——I ask'd for hope, as the bright presage of forgiveness, and like a light, blazing thro' darkness, it came and cheer'd me——'Twas all I liv'd for, and now I die.

Mrs. Bev. Not yet!——Not yet?——Stay but a little and I'll die too.

Bev. No; live, I charge you.——We have a little one. Tho' I have left him, you will not leave him.——To *Lewsen's* kindness I bequeath him——Is not this

this *Charlotte*? We have liv'd in love, tho' I have wrong'd you—Can you forgive me, *Charlotte*?

Char. Forgive you!—O my poor brother!

Bew. 'Lend me your hand, love. So—raise me—
'No—'twill not be—My life is finish'd—O! for a few short moments! to tell you how my heart bleeds for you—That even now, thus dying as I am, dubious and fearful of hereafter, my bosom pang is for your miseries. Support her Heaven!—And now I go—O, merty! mercy! [Dies.]

Lew. Then all is over—How is it, madam?
—My poor *Charlotte* too!

'Enter *Jarvis*.

'*Jar.* How does my master, madam? here's help at hand—Am I too late then?

[*Seeing Beverley*.

Char. 'Tears! tears! why fall you not?—
'O wretched sister!—Speak to her, *Lewson*—Her grief is speechless.

Lew. 'Remove her from this sight—Go to her

'*Jarvis*.—Lead and support her.' Sorrow like her's forbids complaint—Words are for lighter griefs—

Some ministering angel bring her peace! '[*Jar. and*

'*Char. lead her off.*'] And thou, poor breathless corpse, may thy departed soul have found the rest it pray'd for! save but one error, and this last fatal deed, thy life was lovely. Let frailer minds take warning; and from example learn, that want of prudence is want of virtue.

Follies, if uncontroul'd, of every kind,

Grow into passions, and subdue the mind;

With sense and reason bold superior strife,

And conquer honour, nature, fame and life.

EPILOGUE.

Written by a FRIEND.

O N ev'ry Gamester in th' Arabian nation,
 'Tis said that Mahomet denounc'd damnation :
 But in return for wicked cards and dice,
 He gave them black-ey'd girls in paradise.
 Should he thus preach, good countrymen, to you,
 His converts would, I fear, be mighty few.
 So much your hearts are set on sordid gain,
 The brightest eyes around you shine in vain.
 Shou'd the most heav'nly beauty bid you take her,
 You'd rather hold—two aces and a maker,
 By your example, our poor sex drawn in,
 Is guilty of the same unnat'ral sin ;
 The study now of ev'ry girl of parts,
 Is how to win your money, not your hearts.
 O! in what sweet, what ravishing delights
 Our beaux and belles together pass their nights?
 By ardent perturbations kept awake,
 Each views with longing eyes the other's—stake.
 The smiles and graces are from Britain flown,
 Our Cupid is an errant sharper grown,
 And fortune sits on Cytheræ's Throne. }
 In all these things, tho' women may be blam'd,
 Sure men, the wiser men, should be asham'd!
 And 'tis a horrid scandal, I declare,
 That four strange queens should rival all the fair ;
 Four jilts with neither beauty, wit, nor parts,
 O shame! have got possession of their hearts :
 And those bold sluts, for all their queenly pride,
 Have play'd loose tricks, or else they're much bely'd.
 Cards were at first for benefits design'd,
 Sent to amuse, and not enslave the mind.
 From good to bad how easy the transition!
 For what was pleasure once, is now perdition.
 Fair ladies then these wicked Gamesters shun,
 Whoever weds one, is, you see undone.



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